



**Am I the only one who's ever
thought of referring to the
@smithsonian logo as the
“mullet sun” ?**

objects in the mirror are closer than they appear

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closer than they appear**



objects in the mirror
are closer than they
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TECHNOLOGY EXPERIMENTS IN ART: Conserving Software-Based Art
Aaron Straup Cope / January 2014

*This was a talk I delivered at the **Technology experiments in art: Conserving software-based art** <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/technology-experiments-in-art-conserving-software-based-art-new-date-tickets-8587883591> symposium, at the Smithsonian's American Art Museum, in January. It's also a talk that **Seb** <http://www.sebchan.com/> and I did together earlier that same week at the **NY Cultural Tech Meetup** <http://www.meetup.com/cultural-tech/events/155354892/> and a re-telling and a continued poking-at of a talk on the same subject that we did for the **Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material National***

Conference <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2013/11/07/office/#present> , in October 2013.

*Also, the photo in the **title***

slide <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jillyballistic/11892472835/> is by a New York street artist named **Jilly**

Ballistic <http://www.twitter.com/jillyballistic> who is awesome. There's a whole other talk to do about her work and the idea of **artists spelunking through databases and**

archives http://www.wired.com/beyond_the_beyond/2014/02/dead-media-beat-data-archiving-artists/ and the part where I really only know her work by way of the Internet even though she "shows" all her stuff in the subway. But this was not that talk.

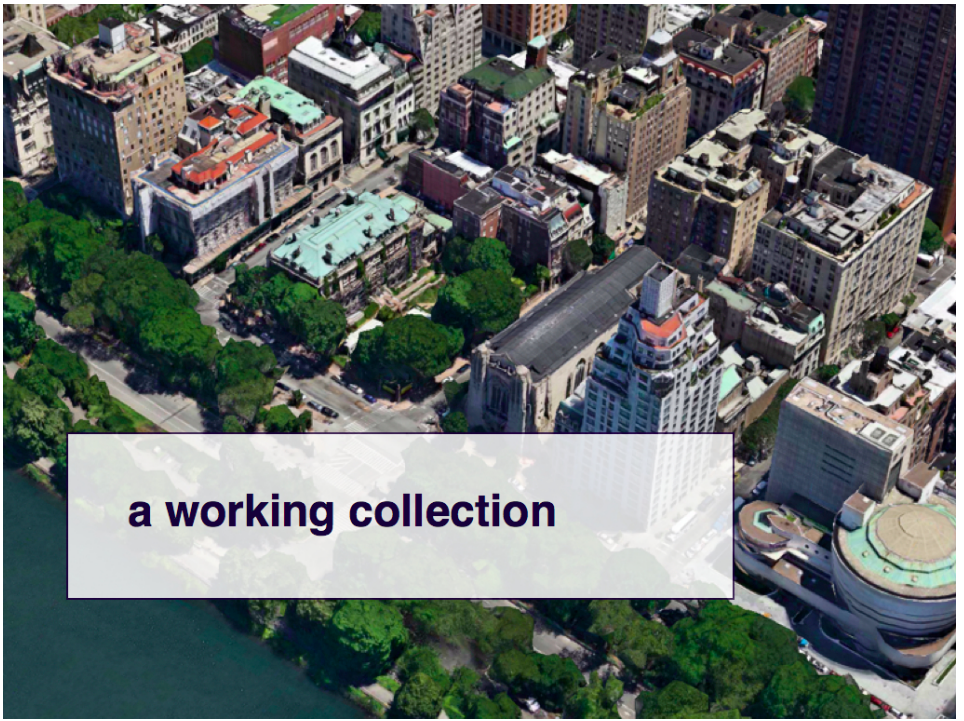


Hi, my name is Aaron. I am the Head of Internet Typing at the **Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum** <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/> .

Most of the talks today have been about art and art museums. The Cooper-Hewitt is a design museum so the issues, the motivations and the approaches we bring to software preservation are often quite different than those confronting an art museum. We were invited to participate in this event for our acquisition of Planetary, an iPad application for visualizing your music collection, last year. The acquisition was made on the merits of its achievement both as a work

graphic or visual design as well as its interaction design. I will talk about those things more later in the talk but we also made this particular acquisition for a third reason which is what I want to start by talking about: That the issues and the opportunities raised by this particular acquisition can act as a lens and a testing ground for future acquisitions.

Increasingly the objects that all design museums collect will look more like like Planetary than not and they will face many of the same issues. Issues that no one is entirely sure how deal with. This may seem a little discouraging at first but that is cost of living in the present and we're certainly not going to figure anything out by standing around doing nothing.



I want to mention the Cooper-Hewitt itself, briefly. We are a capital-D design museum, now housed in Andrew Carnegie's mansion in New York's Upper East Side. We did not begin life as a design museum, though, but rather as a decorative arts museum founded by Sarah and Eleanor Hewitt and conceived as a "working collection", a catalog motivated as much by its thoroughness and depth and open access to both amateurs and craftspeople alike as by its emphasis on quality and excellence. The Hewitt sisters' grandfather was Peter Cooper who had by then founded the Cooper Union which was created to, **and until recently operated under the principle of** <https://medium.com/p/8f73a9c1c123> , providing full-tuition scholarships regardless of background to all its qualifying students and

to ensure them an education "**equal to the best technology schools established**" [http://books.google.com/books?](http://books.google.com/books?id=ek0XAAAYAAJ&pg=PA21&lpg=PA21&dq=%22equal+to+the+best%22+%22peter+cooper%22#v=onepage)

[id=ek0XAAAYAAJ&pg=PA21&lpg=PA21&dq=%22equal+to+the+best%22+%22peter+cooper%22#v=onepage](http://books.google.com/books?id=ek0XAAAYAAJ&pg=PA21&lpg=PA21&dq=%22equal+to+the+best%22+%22peter+cooper%22#v=onepage) ". I choose to believe that both institutions have always shared common aspirations and I choose to believe that these sensibilities continue to serve us well as a design museum in 2014.

With that, I'd like to begin with a few quotes meant to act as a kind of soundtrack music for the rest of this talk.

**“Our minds we salvage
from history’s rubbish, &
they are machines to
make chaos into story.”**

– China Miéville

This is a passage from China Miéville's last novel,

Railsea <http://boingboing.net/2012/05/31/an-interview-with-china-mieville.html> .

“I believe that the fans' energy gets stuck in the clothes. I wanted to preserve that for him.”

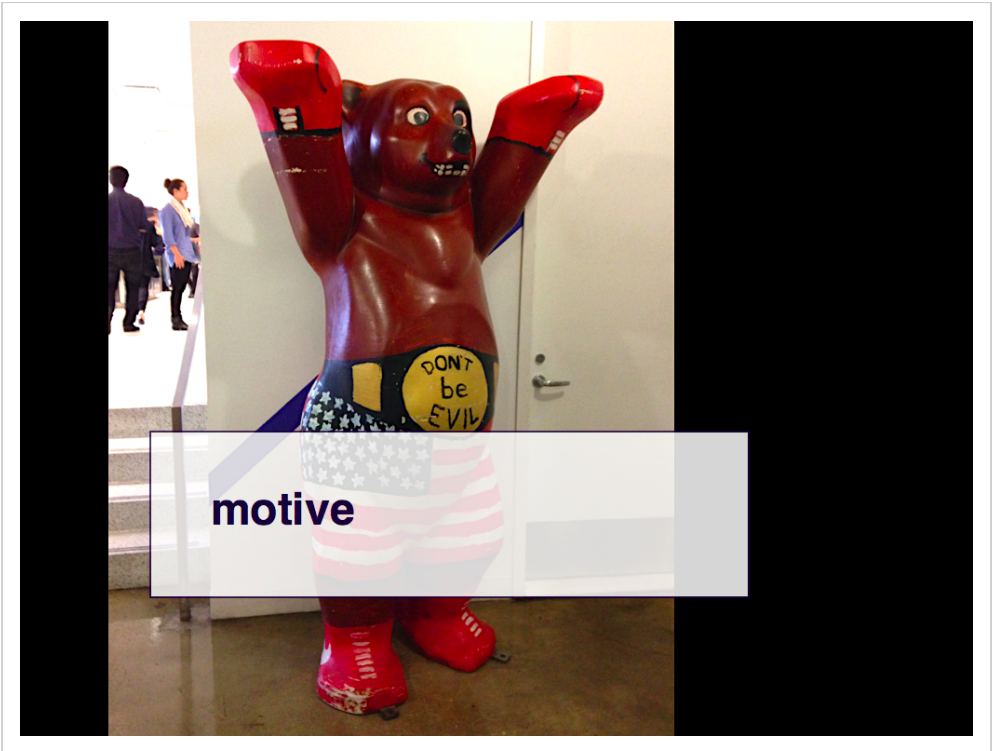
– Lady Gaga

This is a quote by Lady Gaga who has said she will spend two million dollars of her own money **to create a museum for Michael Jackson's clothes** http://www.contactmusic.com/story/lady-gaga-to-open-michael-jackson-museum_4014876 , specifically the clothes he performed in. No, really.

**“This incident shows the ...
danger of inferring a
person’s state of mind from
extemporaneous answers
given under pressure.”**

– Robert Litt

This is a quote from Robert Litt, **the NSA's lawyer** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jan/04/clapper-lie-congress-nsa-national-intelligence-counsel> , trying to explain why his boss, James Clapper the Director of National Intelligence, didn't actually lie to Congress when offering the "least untruthful answer" when asked about the collection of bulk telephony metadata.



I also considered adding a slide with Bill Clinton's famous quote **questioning the meaning of the word**

"is" [http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatter](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatterbox/1998/09/bill_clinton_and_the_meaning_of_is.html)

[box/1998/09/bill_clinton_and_the_meaning_of_is.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/chatterbox/1998/09/bill_clinton_and_the_meaning_of_is.html) when

asked whether he had had an affair with Monica Lewinsky but the

common thread in all these passages is **the idea of motive and how we recognize it** <https://pinboard.in/u:straup/t:motive> . That's an

important question for all museums, but especially for a design museum since by-and-large we all have the same things in our collections. By their nature "design objects" come in multiples, often to the point of being mass-produced or in some cases not even being considered design objects *unless* they are mass-produced.



For example, this is an AK-47 from the collection of the **Kalashnikov Museum** <http://www.ak47-guide.com/index.html> in Izhevsk. It is from the first pilot batch of assault rifles produced in 1948 that would go on to be adopted for use by the Soviet Army in 1949.



This is a Chinese-made AK-47 from **the collection of the National Museum of American**

History http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record_ID:nmah_439260

. Which is to say: *The Smithsonian* has a Chinese-made Russian assault rifle in its collection. Is it just a talisman of the Cold War period or might we imagine that it was a gift from Mao Zedong to Richard Nixon during his famous **1972 visit to**

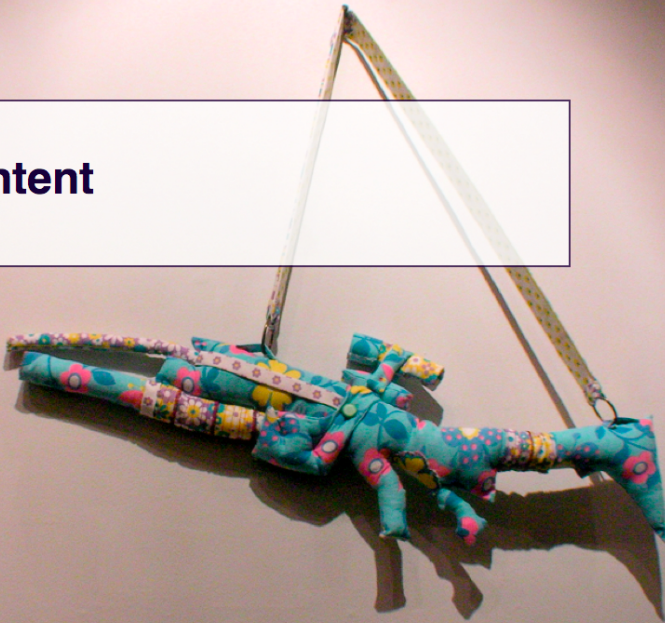
China https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1972_Nixon_visit_to_China ? It is currently not on display.



This is an **AK-47** from the collection of the **CIA**

Museum http://investigations.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/07/24/19562895-secret-cia-museum-features-osama-bin-ladens-ak-47?lite . It was "acquired" sometime in 2012. It is said to have belonged to Osama bin Laden. The museum remains closed to the public and I get the sense that it was never really meant to be known to anyone outside the "family" in the first place.

intent



By now you've probably figured out that these are all the same image and it's not any of the *actual* machine guns that I've been describing. By now you've probably all figured out that this is **the same picture of the same AK-47 from Wikipedia** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AK-47> , so here is a picture of a **plush AK-47** <http://www.flickr.com/photos/23243094@N00/2239900276/> by Mindy Sue Myers.

I might also have also told you that any one of those AK-47s belonged to a child soldier in Sierra Leone. That is was from a museum

devoted to telling the history of child soldiers and the mineral wars that have plagued Africa for the last fifty year. So why does this matter?

It's difficult look at the CIA Museum's AK-47 and not also see Napoleon's **Vendôme**

Column https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Place_Vend%C3%B4me#The_Vend.C3.B4me_Column . For anyone not familiar with the Vendôme Column it's a big-ass sculpture in the center of Paris in a square originally built to celebrate the conquests of the French Empire. It was claimed to have been made from the melted canons belonging to all the armies that Napoleon defeated at the Battle of Austerlitz. Napoleon was not lent to subtlety and the Vendôme Column is essentially the 19th century version of what many people today now associate with the fictional Conan the Barbarian's answer to the question "*What is best in life?*" He replied: "*To crush your enemies. To see them driven before you. To hear the lamentation of their women.*" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PQ6335puOc> "

If you think I am just being provocative stop for a moment and imagine what the reaction in the United States would have been if the Kalashnikov Museum had acquired Osama bin Laden's AK-47.



This on the other hand is **a proper work of art by Peter Kennard and Cat Phillipps** <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/oct/15/tony-blair-selfie-photo-op-imperial-war-museum> . It was on display at the Imperial War Museum in Manchester, in 2013, as part of an exhibition about contemporary art and war.

The late painter Francis Bacon gave an interview, somewhere around the mid-point of his career, in which he said that he aspired to create paintings that defied narrative. Whether or not he succeeded or whether or not he even still believed that idea by the time of his death is

sort of irrelevant. We have always celebrated works of exceptional execution and in contemporary times we increasingly afford artists the luxury to pursue a singular itch to that end.

It is interesting to consider that as the art world and the discourse that surrounds it continues to get wordier and more theory-driven we are also seeing both museums and artists create works that can only be described as spectacles. That's a whole other talk but just keep this idea in the back of your mind: That people are starting **to use spectacle itself as a kind of**

medium <http://bldgblog.blogspot.com/2013/08/combat-preservation.html> in part, I think, because it remains bigger than words.



“craft”

I want to mention craft and the timeless arts-and-crafts debate only long enough to describe a scenario guaranteed to upset everyone involved. That capital-A art is the Abel to capital-C craft's Cain, but with a twist. If art will knowingly murder his brother the problem he faces is that his brother is also a

zombie <http://airshipdaily.com/the-political-economy-of-zombies> who *can never die* and wants to eat his brain.

It's not a very flattering picture for anyone but the reason I enjoy this fiction is because it's a useful way to consider design. That is, design is the shadow of the unresolvable struggle between an

outstanding, over-achieving sociopath and a his seen-to-be lesser too
who refuses to give up no matter what anyone says.



This is the world's first operational 3D printed hand gun. It was acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum last year. It is worth mentioning that **in writing about the acquisition** <http://www.dezeen.com/2013/09/26/movie-kieran-long-v-and-a-museum-london-3d-printed-gun/> Dezeen (.com) made a point of noting that *"the original prototypes did not arrive at the museum in time for London Design Festival, so the museum printed out a copy in London based on (the) blueprints."*

Right?

Because, you know... *it's a 3D printed object*. The whole point of 3D printing is to make anything Walter Benjamin ever said seem quaint by comparison. That does not make it any less difficult to resist the allure of a thing imbued with aura, whether it's real or imagined. Is the very first 3D printed hand gun any more or less special than the very first AK-47?

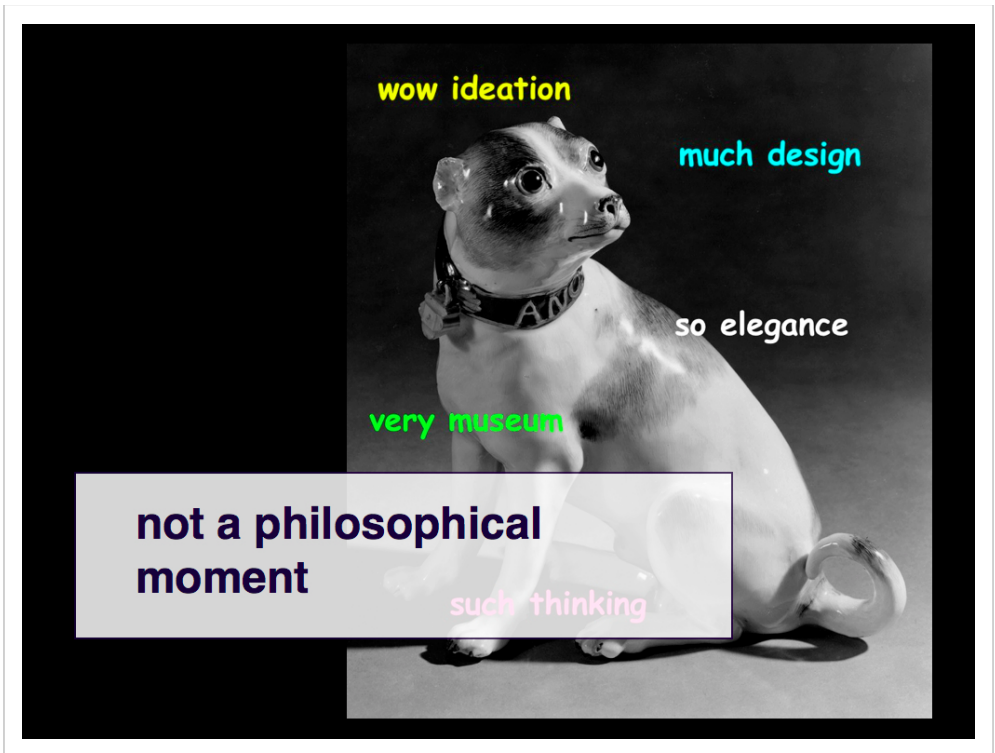


I mentioned that the Cooper-Hewitt began life as a decorative arts museum. One way to consider the decorative arts is that they are exceptional forms of traditional craft. But more importantly, that excellence is also reliability *reproduceable*. Without that guarantee there is often only the argument about whether something is art *or* craft.

There's a reason that many design museums began life as decorative arts museums. Long before capital-D design existed the decorative arts existed to provide beautiful yet functional objects to those with the means to pay for them. In the last hundred or so years we've seen the decorative arts transforming in to something that we now better understand as "design". As the fruit of those labours began to

reach, and were ultimately influenced by, a larger body politic you begin to see the practice of creating elegant and serviceable products being applied to more than just decorative objects.

So we might consider contemporary design practice as akin to the decorative arts but with motive or deliberation. It is not the singular exceptional itch of the individual artist but rather the art and craft (sorry) of an elegant solution to a problem that can be articulated, in the service of a plurality.



Here's the rub, though. No matter how impressive or elegant a solution they are not meant to be contemplative endeavours. They can't be. Imagine any thing you consider to be an elegant design solution or object and then try to imagine having a PHILOSOPHICAL MOMENT every time you used it.

We celebrate design that ultimately can be taken for granted. We celebrate a practice whose products afford us the plausible illusion of fading in to the background, of not always demanding center stage, and of not asking us to spend our already too-busy lives in a state of near-constant intellectual Rapture.



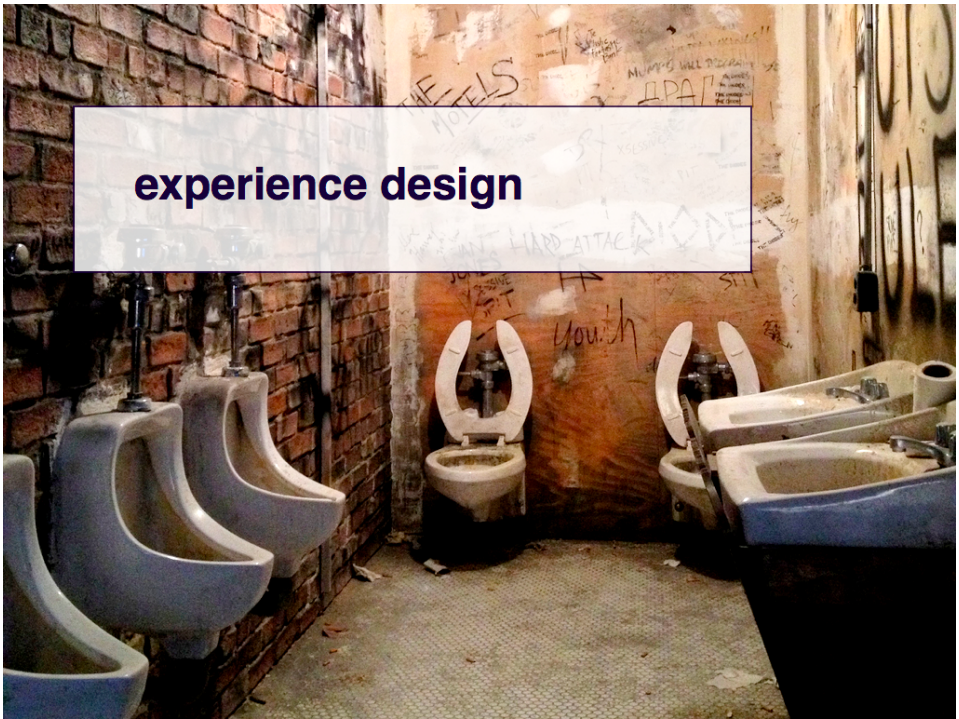
Which is hard for museums because we are all about the Rapture.

Remember, that is the luxury that we have always afforded high art. It's okay. The problem for a design museum is that we are all collecting the same mass-produced objects whose surface elegance is often doing battle to *actively hide from its users* the complexities of its motive or production. We are left to unpack things that exist to dissolve in to the normalcy of our lives.

We're still not very good at that. We have a bad habit of falling

back on how "pretty" a thing is or the mastery of its manufacturing prowess or a designer's access to production facilities as proxies for the merit and value of a design solution. The problem that design museums are facing, though, is that we're increasingly collecting things which have no thing-ness about them so the rhetoric we've always used to talk about our collections make less and less sense.

Things like interaction design or service design or user-centered design or experience design. Given the challenge we already face collecting physical objects what are we supposed to do with practices that are as real as they are intangible?



Do you know who spends a lot of time trafficking in experience design, possibly more than anyone else in the aggregate? *Museums*.

What else are dioramas except early stage attempts at experience design? Because dioramas are basically fancy display cases for delicate or sensitive objects we don't usually allow people to wander around *in* them. But when you consider that the film maker Peter Jackson, and his production company Weta, are **creating a life-size "trench experience" from the Gallipoli**

Campaign <http://www.centenarynews.com/index.php/article?id=800> inside Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand, it

doesn't seem like it will be long before museums can finally indulge their almost Captain Ahab like fantasy of a truly immersive experience. Personally I am waiting to see whether the trench installation offers a "night at the museum" style package where you can sleep in a pool of standing water, swatting away rats all while dodging ear-shattering explosions. When you stop to consider the many inevitable retrospectives that New Zealand museums will mount to celebrate the career of Peter Jackson, a native son, **the crossover possibilities** <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0103873/> are endless.

For the time being we're left with stuff like this. This is a diorama from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's **Punk: Chaos to Couture** <http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/punk> exhibition last year. It is a recreation of the men's bathroom at the now defunct music venue **CBGB's** <http://www.youshouldbuyart.com/products/joseph-o-holmes-cbgb-stage> where many of the bands that would shape the musical genre got their start. If you're wondering: It's not a functioning bathroom or, if it is, there's no way to find out because there's a short glass barrier preventing you from entering the space.

The exhibition's curators made a point of saying that the exhibition was about the influence of punk rock on the world of fashion and that they very deliberately stayed away from the politics of those involved. Which if we take them at their words makes the inclusion of an installation like this all the more problematic because it's the kind of thing where malice is almost more comforting than simple negligence.

I am going to leave the interpretation and meaning of using a tarted-up version of a "gritty" bathroom as a proxy object for... something as an exercise for the audience and only say that this installation was very deliberate and entirely with motive. It was *designed*.

<http://cprhw.tt/88sb>

<http://www.foeromeo.org/conferences-etc/can-an-exhibition-be-a-story>

Fiona Romeo's essay **Can An Exhibition Be A Story?**

<http://www.foeromeo.org/conferences-etc/can-an-exhibition-be-a-story> is an excellent discussion of some of these larger questions surrounding exhibition design and I'd encourage you to read what she has to say.



I've been joking for about a year now that **the Cooper-Hewitt has acquired the Global War on Terror** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2012/12/01/coffee-and-wifi/#timepixels> as an outstanding example of contemporary service design. This is a deliberate provocation meant as a way to force people to consider something which undoubtedly *will be collected* eventually but for which we lack any good conceptual guidelines to suggest how or what to collect. Do institutions collect the security theater that has plagued American airports for over a decade now? Do they collect the empty rooms with the angry dogs in them? Do we simply preserve those rooms or do we operate them as an interactive element of the museum that visitors can experience?

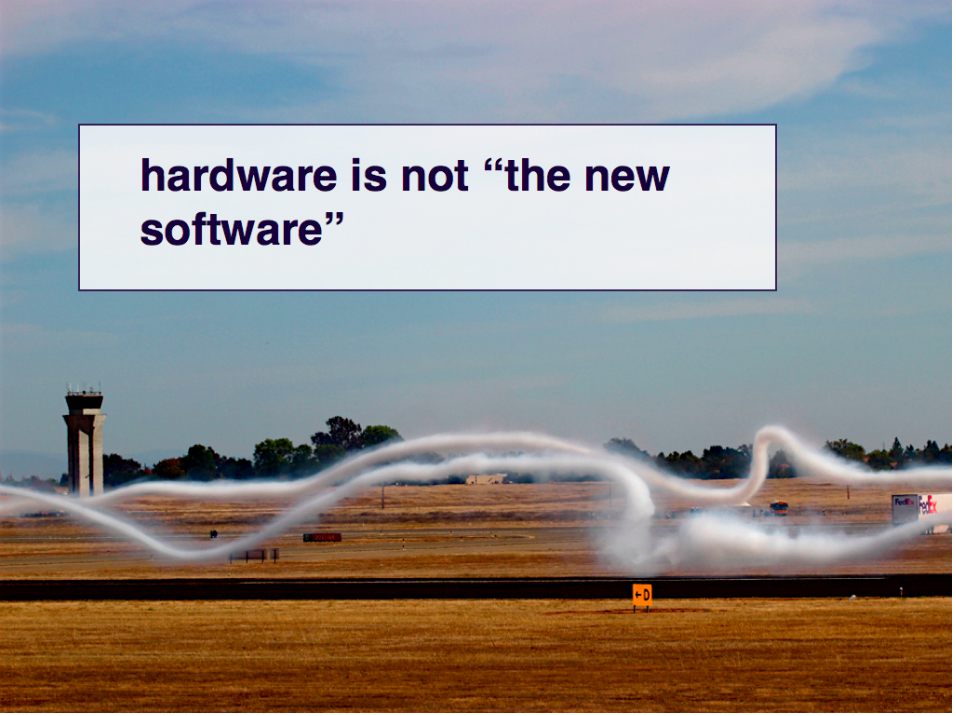
And then this happened.

This is a photograph of a group called **Witness Torture** <http://www.witnesstorture.org/blog/2014/01/11/activists-occupy-national-museum-of-american-history-install-torture-exhibit-to-mark-guantanamo-anniversary/> protesting the continued operation of the US detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. This photo was taken yesterday at the National Museum of American History in front of, as you can see, an exhibition called **The Price of Freedom: Americans at War** <http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/> . You might not know that, though, unless I'd told you. You might reasonably enough look at this photo and think these were mannequins and that they were a bold and challenging position taken by the curators and exhibition designers on the cost of war in the 21st century.

Tangentially related, at this point during the talk the mystery guy who'd been sitting by himself at the back of the room all day suddenly got up and left...



Or how about this? This is an actual water-boarding device from an actual museum. This is on display at **The Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide** <http://www.tuolsleng.com/> in Phnom Penh. The genocide refers to the Khmer Rouge regime and the museum itself is housed in the former Security Prison 21, itself a former high school, where up to twenty thousand people were tortured and killed. You're not supposed to talk about water-boarding as "experience design" in polite company but it is about as designed an experience as you can get.



hardware is not “the new software”

Meanwhile, about a week ago I started hearing the phrase "*hardware is the new software*" a lot. I think this is partly because we've just come out of **the hype cycle around**

CES <http://www.tigoe.net/blog/category/networks/452/>, the big annual consumer electronics exhibition in Las Vegas and partly because of all the excitement around 3D printing and DIY-hardware and, of course, partly because if you're Nest you just made 3 billion dollars selling your hardware company to Google.

I don't think that hardware is the new software, though. I think one thing that might be happening is that we are starting to see the end

days of a twenty or thirty year stretch of relatively *agnostic hardware* and that will usher in a whole new set of changes. As the hardware that is produced becomes more and more like gated communities we are starting to see some of the same dynamics around access to the means of production and distribution that existed (that still exists in many cases) in traditional product design before the advent of fast and cheap manufacturing.

But make no mistake, whether you or I continue to have access to that hardware it's all still full of software.



The agency of all that hardware still lives in the software.

Consider these trash bins in London. It was discovered in the summer of 2013 that many of these bins had been fitted with wireless tracking devices, from a company called Presence Orb, that would record and log the unique addresses of the wifi chips in passing cellphones. The idea of the company behind the scheme was to sell the information it collected and analyzed to advertisers although the program was quickly shut down when the general public became aware of it.

This is a photo by **James**

Bridle <http://www.flickr.com/photos/stml/sets/72157635007719863/> who walked around London drawing a variety of icons in chalk on these trash bins to try and make visible the presence of intent in these objects.



Here's a slightly less creepy version of the same sort of thing that we've lived with for years now. Does anyone really feel like they understand how their smoke detector works or how it chooses when it will lose its tiny robot mind and start screaming at them? We know how a smoke detector is *supposed* to work but almost everyone will tell you their smoke detector might as well have a mind, and a motive, of its own for all that anyone understands its behaviour. Here's the marketing copy for Nest's take on the smoke detector, simply called

"Protect" <https://nest.com/smoke-co-alarm/life-with-nest-protect/> ":

"Before turning on a loud, howling alarm, Nest Protect gives you an early warning we call Heads-Up. Nest Protect lights up yellow and speaks with a human voice. It tells you where smoke is or when carbon monoxide levels are rising. This gives you an earlier warning if there's an emergency, or allows you to silence Nest Protect if it's just a nuisance alarm, like an overly enthusiastic toaster."

I have not taken one of Nest's smoke detectors apart to investigate what's going on inside and maybe there are some sophisticated sensors in there but it's basically just a smoke detector like all other smoke detectors ever made. It's nice that it can tell you some of the details of what it thinks is going on but the important part is that it *chooses* to tell you anything at all before freaking out.



E_EXCESSIVE_MOTIVE

We don't have sensors for "choosing" yet. We still have software for that.

That distinction between sensors and decisions is important to keep in mind. Once upon a time there was a website where you could share your travel itinerary with friends and relations. It was called Dopplr and has since gone out of business but during its brief life it would **calculate your carbon**

tprint <https://web.archive.org/web/20080704073739/http://blog.dopplr.com/2008/03/07/dopplr-at-etech-announcing-carbon-calculations-with-amee/> based on your travel plans. I remember

hearing one of the founders, **Matt**

Jones <http://magicalnihilism.com/> , describing their motivation for adding this functionality as wanting "*to be the scale, not the diet*". Dopplr did not want to be in the business of telling you what to do, it wanted instead simply to show you what you were doing.

Museums, I think, liken themselves to the diet and so we've spent quite a lot of time collecting scales. This is a practice that is becoming increasingly problematic not because there's anything inherently wrong with it but because the world around that practice is changing.

This is another product from Nest, it's a networked thermostat that adapts itself and its settings as it monitors how and when you heat your home. It's pretty clever. We have **a pair of them in our collection** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/people/51676507/> . They are elegant pieces of industrial design. We did not, however, acquire any of the software that powers them.



E_EXCESSIVE_DREYFUSS

So you might be forgiven for asking if we haven't just acquired this year's knock-off of Henry Dreyfuss' classic **T86**

Round <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/18648793>
/ thermostat. Remember, the Cooper-Hewitt was founded as a *working collection* so there is a solid argument to be made for collecting the Nest thermostat on precisely those grounds.

But to consider the Nest thermostat solely as a work of industrial design — of manufacturing prowess — seems like a missed opportunity at best and completely missing the point at worst. To make matters worse we don't know *how* to collect all that other mysterious stuff that

makes the Nest thermostat remarkable. We have neither the conceptual nor the technical infrastructure to house and preserve the software systems that power the Nest nor do we have the legal infrastructure to make a still-active company in the marketplace comfortable giving us that source code with the trust and confidence that we won't share it with the rest of the world.

This is really important. It would be unfair and unrealistic of us to ask Nest for their source code at this point. That *software* rather than the fancy plastic molds which house that software (and that will change next season anyway to accomodate the demands of fashion) is Nest's business and so it suggests the need for cultural heritage institutions to begin imagining something akin to an escrow system for intellectual property. Because without that all we will be left with in a hundred years is some off-gassing plastic shells and the breathless rhetoric of printed marketing materials to help us understand the past.

Kjøkkenbord! Denne gangen trenger de din hjelp, Fargefjorpen har nemlig stjålet alle fargene! Alt du må gjøre er å laste ned appen "TINE KUER" i App Store eller i Google Play til mobilen eller nettbrettet ditt.



lenses

PS. Hvis du vil besøke en av våre TINE-gårder og hilse på flere kuer, så gå inn på tine.no/gårder. Her kan du også delta i vår store fotokonkurranse. Kanskje får vi se nettopp dine bilder på neste års

For example we have one of the millions and millions of iPhones that have been sold since 2007. We even have a first generation iPhone but to the best of my knowledge there is no hero-story behind it. It was not acquired, or donated, by anyone who stood for hours in line at Apple's flagship store in San Francisco on the day it was first released. It was purchased, most likely and like so many other iPhones, online and delivered a few weeks later via UPS. It is just like the iPhone you probably have sitting at the bottom of a box and which you are keeping for sentimental reasons and because it represents a moment when the promise of the future seemed like it had been realized, however briefly.

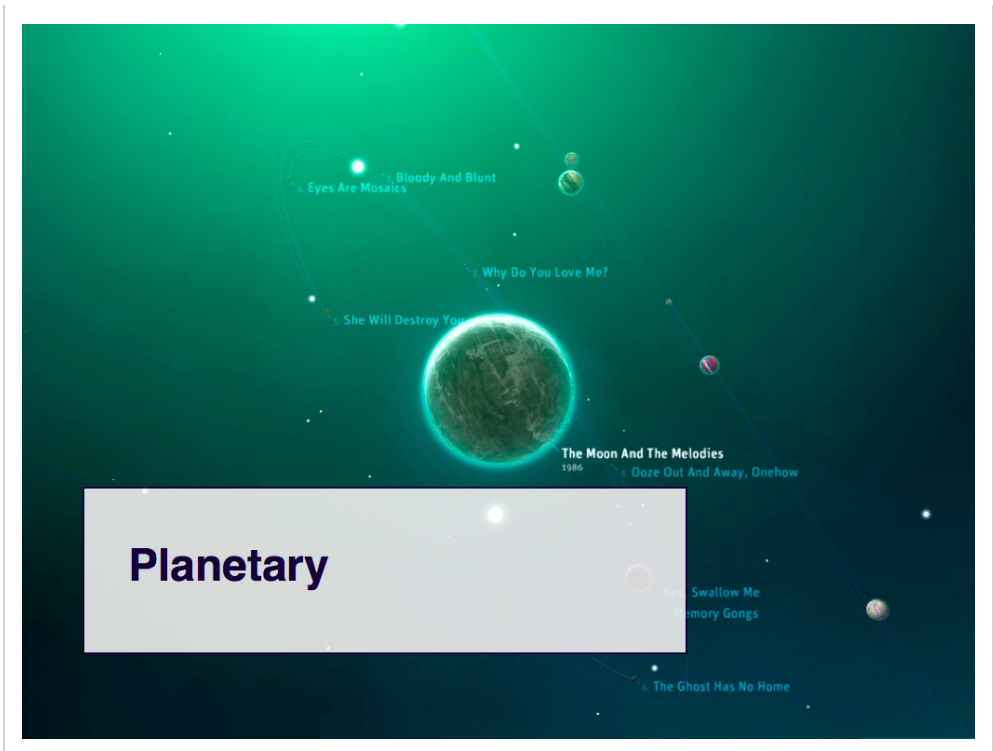
These are pretty good reasons for collecting a thing and it's why we'll do more than you will to make sure that our iPhone suffers fewer of the ravages of time. That is why institutions like the Smithsonian exist. And even more than the Nest thermostat the iPhone is a King Hell example of manufacturing and production. Like the Nest, though, we did not acquire the software that runs the iPhone. Given the state of acrimony and competition in the mobile industry it is unlikely that Apple will ever let that source code see the daylight outside of their soon-to-be giant donut-shaped fortress in California.

Again, it suggests that if there was an institution of trust on the scale of the Smithsonian or the Library of Congress, an institution with both legal and moral backing then maybe we could imagine a scenario where those materials would be placed in a trust that would safe-guard them from ever being seen in *our lifetime* but would also prevent them from being lost to future generations. This is not as far-fetched as it sounds. This is basically what museums look like in a world where the Internet exists. Who among you has seen all the objects in the Smithsonian's collection? Who among you has ever seen, or even knows about, all 213 thousand objects in the Cooper-Hewitt's collection? In a world where people take networked databases for granted museums increasingly start to look more and more like the world's biggest conceptual art project; preservation without access starts to look more and more like blind faith.



Even if we take a punt on the very real challenges of trying to create a preservation framework for still-living intellectual property, the more immediate problem we face is one where museums often won't even turn on the electronic equipment in their collections. That iPhone we've got with its version of iOS 1.0 (or maybe it was upgraded before we acquired it?) will remain forever powered-off because we risk damaging the circuit boards or simply because we've removed the battery to prevent the risk of it leaking and damaging the other objects in our collection. It all seems like a theater of the absurd, sometimes. The worst part is that in the absence of working solutions for genuinely hard problems we do these things for good reasons. But can we meaningfully talk about the iPhone without talking about the touchable

interfaces, about the interaction design that was afforded by all that swiping? In short, about the software.



Aside from all its qualities as a stand-alone design object this is why we acquired Planetary. Planetary does not answer all of these questions but it does force us to address them.

Planetary was the first product by Bloom, a San Francisco startup founded in 2010 by Ben Cerveny, Tom Carden, and Jesper Andersen, to explore new forms of data visualization and interactive products. It visualizes a user's music library as a series of celestial bodies. Songs are moons, albums are planets, artists are suns—and the orbits of each are determined by the length of albums and tracks. Their brightness represents their frequency of playback; songs and artists played less frequently than others drift further and further away, over

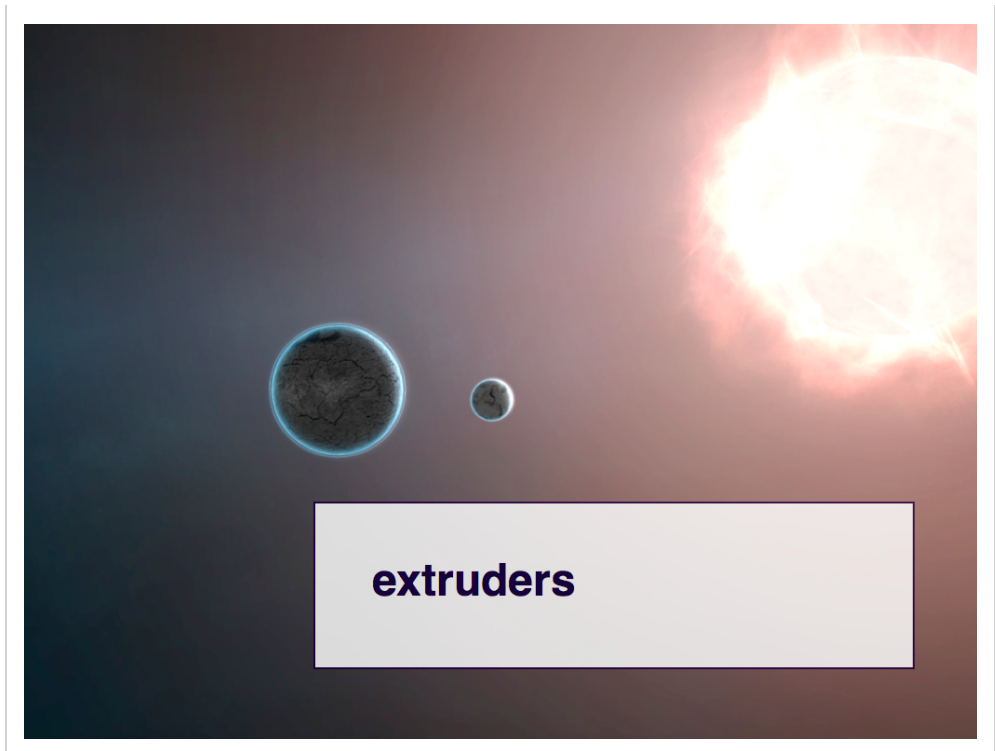
time, from the planets or suns they orbit. Planetary is also a working music player and the time it takes for a moon to orbit a planet is governed by the length of the track that moon represents.



“pop culture instruments”

Bloom was fond of telling people that it was creating a suite of "pop culture instruments" and that Planetary was just the first of many. At the time the company was launched Ben Cerveny, one of the founders, wrote:

"We're building a series of bite-sized applications (instruments) that bring the richness of game interactions and the design values of motion graphics to the depth and breadth of social network activity, locative tools, and streaming media services. . . . These Bloom Instruments aren't merely games or graphics. They're new ways of seeing what's important."



What I like about the idea of these small bite-sized tools to visualize discrete problems, or sets of information, is that you see this idea popping up all over the place these days. Just think about the number of charts and graphs and other visualizations that are available to you every time you view your bank account online.

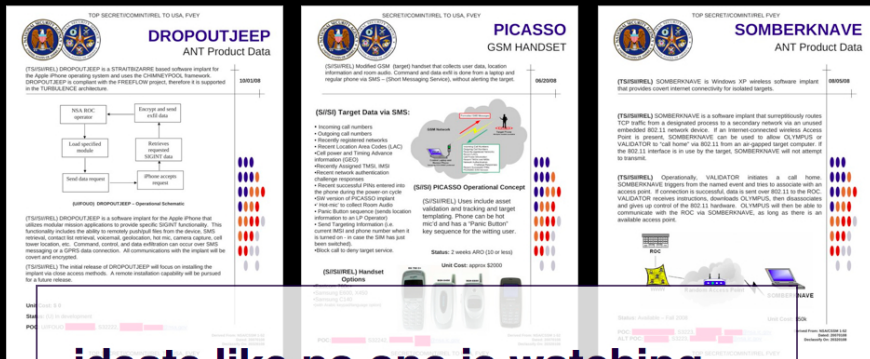
Consider the amount of effort that goes in to trying to help you make sense of just your spending habits and then multiply that by the volume of information we are creating and leaving behind us like a shadow of the past keen to fill the vacuum of the present. Consider the work of **Nicolas Felton** <http://www.feltron.com/> whose obsessive

and beautiful **annual reports detailing the various facets of his life** <http://www.fastcodesign.com/1672108/nicholas-felton-unveils-his-latest-annual-report> everyone gushes over and which Facebook eventually operationalized in their

Timeline <https://www.facebook.com/about/timeline> feature.

Consider the

NSA. <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2013/07/25/verb/#quantified>



ideate like no one is watching

They do this too and they do it really well, arguably better than anyone else right now. If you see past the graphic horror of their PowerPoint slides and look carefully at the scale of their endeavour and the ways that they claim to tackle the challenge and you start to see tools like Planetary.

Honestly it's hard to get passed the names for the Planetary-like tools and projects that the NSA builds for itself. On top of everything else our burden will be to live through the next fifty years worth of critical etymologies and hand-wringing surrounding **the hidden meaning of**

names <http://ternus.github.io/nsaproductgenerator/> like
DROPOUTJEEP and *SOUFFLETROUGH*.

But every time someone talks to you about "personal informatics" understand that the NSA is trying to solve the same basic set of problems and replace the number of miles you ran or the colour of your baby's poo with the question of Original Sin. In seeing the meaning of past actions as a way to make sense of present intent. Of judgement.



Since this is a symposium on software preservation I am going to suggest that if there is any one industry the cultural heritage sector should look to for tips and tricks on how to navigate a world gone increasingly digital it is the surveillance industry. It is, perhaps, not an association we would like to make but when you remove the agonies of interpretation our respective practices share more in common than not. It is worth remembering the Smithsonian's own Reginald Creighton, who was the manager of Information Storage and Retrieval Projects and would help shape the

Selgem <http://www.worldcat.org/title/selgem-a-system-for-collection-management/oclc/220524468> collection management system, did so after having spent over a decade **doing systems**

programming and methods

analysis [http://books.google.com/books?](http://books.google.com/books?id=PaHNw21jblgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=recoding+the+museum&hl=en&sa=X&ei=uoTzUou8MsnWyQH09oHoAg&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=creighton&f=false)

[id=PaHNw21jblgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=recoding+the+museum&hl=en&sa=X&ei=uoTzUou8MsnWyQH09oHoAg&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=creighton&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=PaHNw21jblgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=recoding+the+museum&hl=en&sa=X&ei=uoTzUou8MsnWyQH09oHoAg&ved=0CCgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=creighton&f=false) ... at the National Security Agency.


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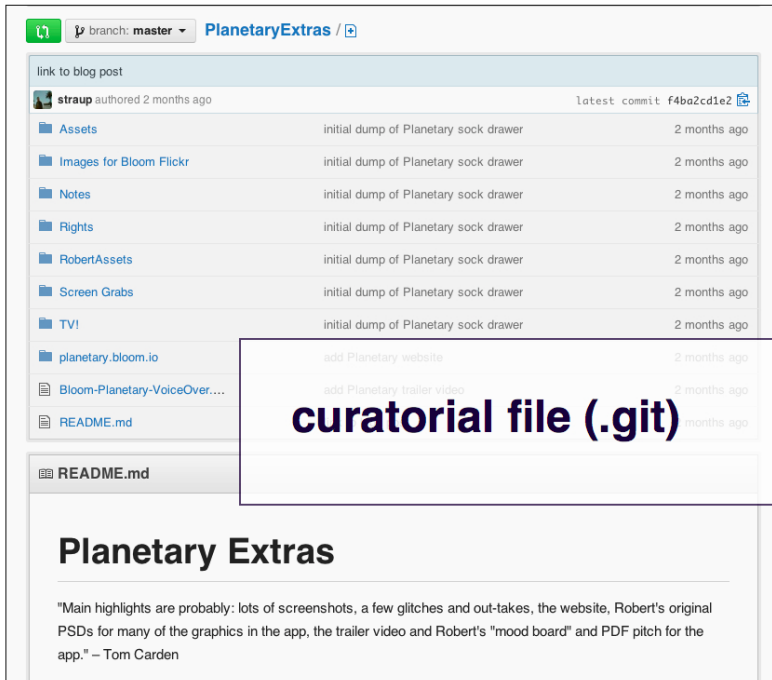
6814.1.2013

1: /*
2:  * AlphaChooser.cpp
3:  * Kepler
4:  *
5:  * Created by Tom Carden on 3/14/11.
6:  * Copyright 2011 Bloom Studio, Inc. All rights reserved.
7:  */
8:
9:
10: #include "AlphaChooser.h"
11: #include "cinder/gl/gl.h"
12: #include "cinder/Text.h"
13: #include "Globals.h"
14: #include "BloomGl.h"
15: #include "BloomScene.h"
16: #include "cinder/Utilities.h" // for toString
17: #include <sstream>
18:
19: using namespace ci;
20: using namespace ci::app;
21: using namespace std;
22:
23: void AlphaChooser::setup( const Font &font, const Vec2f &interfaceSize
24: {
25:     // Textures
26:     mAlphaString    = "ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ";
27:     mAlphaIndex      = 0;
28:     mAlphaChar       = 'A';
29:
30:     Font::Vec2f fontAlphaStringLength( font->getLineHeight() * mAlphaString.length() );
31:     TextLayout layout;
32:     layout.setFont( font );
33:     layout.setColor( Color::white() );
34: }

```

“view source”

So the first thing we did was to open source all of the software, under a BSD license, and as many of the visual assets as were ours to do so with. We open sourced the code as a preservation strategy. We open sourced the code because we want people to port it to other systems. We want Planetary to live on beyond any one device or operating system.



We open sourced the code but we also released the complete revision history of that code, including all the bug reports, so that people could see both how and why the decisions were made and to understand the trade-offs that created Planetary. As a design museum those trade-offs are paramount to the things we collect. For all the stories of Steve Jobs' perfectionism the history and success of Apple is based on what they've been able to accomplish in the moment and not the magic happy pony world any of its employees wishes were possible.

We also released as many of the draft sketches and notes as we could get our hands on. In a way we open sourced the curatorial file that all museums keep for their objects. I hope we, and other museums, do

more of this. This is where the velocity of an object's history within an institution is encoded and that institution or curator specific understanding of an object, cut across time, is what distinguishes one museum from another.



living objects

We are trying to imagine how we might collect an object that looks something like this. When we announced the acquisition **Seb wrote** <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/object-of-the-day/2013/08/26/planetary-collecting-and-preserving-code-living-object> :

"We liken this situation to that of a specimen in a zoo. In fact, given that the Smithsonian also runs the National Zoo, consider Planetary as akin to a panda. Planetary and other software like it are living objects. Their acquisition by the museum, does not and should not seal them in carbonite like Han Solo. Instead, their acquisition simply

transfers them to a new home environment where they can be cared for out of the wild, and where their continued genetic preservation requires an active breeding program and community engagement and interest. Open sourcing the code is akin to a panda breeding program. If there is enough interest then we believe that Planetary's DNA will live on in other skin on other platforms. Of course we will preserve the original, but it will be 'experienced' through its offspring."

We are fortunate that Bloom's CTO **Tom Carden** <http://www.tom-carden.co.uk/> has agreed to make himself available, for a couple of years at least, and if anyone ever does port Planetary to another system — maybe as an Android application, or a WebGL application so that Planetary will work in a web browser — he will look over those changes and be the final arbiter of whether or not those changes reflect the *intent* that Bloom was working towards. This kind of collaboration is really important both for Planetary and, I think, for other software preservation projects. We are not interested in preserving particular bits of Objective C source code but rather the thing which that code birthed.



Don't worry, though, we also printed everything out on archival paper using the approved OCR-compliant typographic conventions. Maybe one day someone will recite the source code for Planetary the way people perform Homer's Iliad or Joyce's Ulysses?



then-best representation

But, I want to emphasize that we did not acquire an iPad. **We already had one of those.** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/18797293/>

We acquired source code that happens to have been written for an iOS device. This fact tells us something about the circumstances under which Planetary was created but I don't think that it defines what Planetary is or was trying to be. The iPad was simply the then-best representation of what Planetary was trying to be.

Had Bloom survived longer as a company they would have

almost certainly released an Android version of Planetary and then what? Which one would we have acquired? Both of them? Only the iOS version because it is not so much the genesis of the project but the first manifestation of it? What if the Android version, by virtue of whatever hardware or operating system level optimizations it enjoyed, better embodied the spirit of the project?

So yeah, we acquired code because to my never-ending dismay **it's just Sol Lewitt all the way down** <https://twitter.com/search?q=sol%20lewitt%20from%3Athisisaaronland&src=typd&f=realtime> but we acquired that code as a way create an environment that will hopefully foster the preservation of the interaction design that was at the root of Planetary. Have we succeed yet? Probably not. Have we created the circumstances that will *afford* that preservation? I hope so.



Since the acquisition, this a thing that's also happened.

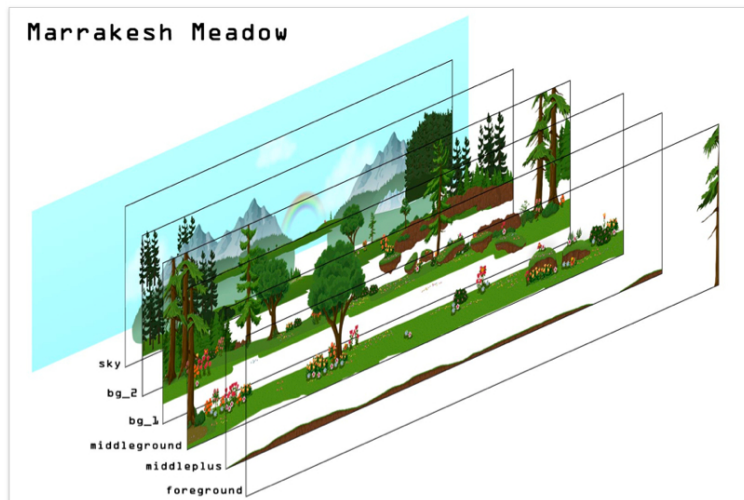
TinySpeck <http://www.tinyspeck.com/> , a small software company based in Vancouver and San Francisco, released all the artwork and eventually most of the software for their failed mutli-player online game called Glitch, in to the public domain. Writing about the decision to place all the Glitch artwork in the public domain CEO and co-founder **Stewart Butterfield** **said** <http://boingboing.net/2013/12/11/glitch.html> :

"[B]ecause when you come down to it, as a species, culture is all we've got. The more of it we make, the better. The freer the materials

the easier it is for people to make new things. Glitch was not a significant cultural milestone in its own right, but we hope that it has an outsize impact in its ability to foster the creation of more art and the expression of more creativity."

One of the things that made Glitch interesting is that at its core the game was a really just series of triggers. The game itself did not have any single narrative arc. Instead every object was programmed to operate inside of certain constraints and then the world of the game was left to form itself based on how the players interacted with each other and their environment. So I like to understand what TinySpeck did in giving away all their "stuff" as another example of using open source as a preservation strategy for an endeavour that is very real but which lacks, by design, the known and quantifiable territory of a single work of "art".

What I *am* doing with Glitch



I suppose an easier way around this is to say what I'm *not* doing with Glitch which is rebuilding the whole thing.

To give you some idea of what I mean when I say "all their stuff" this is an exploded view of the pieces that made up any given scene in Glitch. Every one of those trees or flowers or background elements, along with the metadata indicating where to place those objects in a given scene, were made freely available for anyone to play with or to use as the building blocks for future projects.



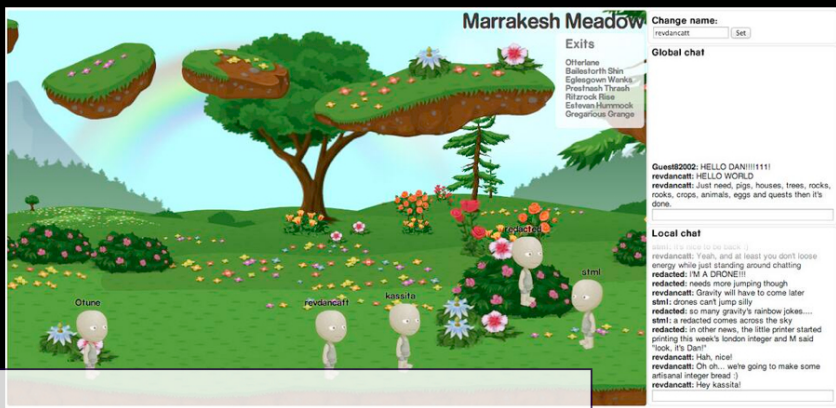
<http://cprhw.tt/nt26>

<http://revdancatt.com/2013/12/06/minimum-viable-ur-modestly-rebuilding-glitch-an-update-of-sorts/>

That screen shot is from a **blog post by Dan**

Catt <http://revdancatt.com/2013/12/06/minimum-viable-ur-modestly-rebuilding-glitch-an-update-of-sorts/> . Dan's project, and there are other more ambitious projects like his, is to try to rebuild a

kind of minimal viable version of not so much the game itself but the parts of the game that he used; the parts that he now misses.



life imitates holodeck

This is what the project looks like today. You could say that it's little more than a glorified chat-room but I think that does a disservice both to the intensely social nature of games like Glitch and the role that the graphic design and constraints of the interaction design played in foster that social environment. Also, *it works*. It is the proverbial diorama that allows entry to visitors.

I think this is important work to watch. I don't think it will solve all of our problems but I think that it suggests what the path we will follow in the years to come will look and feel like. I think that as we are forced to find ways to collect and preserve things that are simply too big and too complex for any one institution to grapple with we might

instead focus on the many smaller variations-on-a-theme that spring up in the wake of an endeavour as a way to hold on to the original.

Dan's project is not necessarily Glitch as its creators imagined but is it Glitch enough that perhaps we might look to the theater, with its multiple and on-going performances of a single text, as our inspiration? Perhaps it allows us to imagine software preservation the way one imagines a working collection.

thank you

labs.cooperhewitt.org

Thank you.

2014-01-17

this is privatesquare



hotel coffee



i was there



don't tell foursquare



THIS HAPPENED

**I haven't left this hotel in 36
hours...**

what would elizabeth david do?

**what would elizabeth david
do?**



what would elizabeth david do?

Aaron Straup Cope / WebWise 2014

*I was asked to speak about APIs at **WebWise***

2014 <http://imlswbewise.org/> , in Baltimore, this year.

Specifically I was asked to lead a workshop about why cultural heritage institutions would even want an API and how they might go about justifying its existing before, during and after its creation. As such it was not a technical talk, per se. Or at least not nearly as technical as it might have been.

I didn't have notes for this talk so the slides are included below, as-is. They make a certain amount of sense without a spoken dialogue but I am posting them here mostly to have a slightly more permanent

record than whatever the nightmare of backwards incompatible presentation software affords. Apologies in advance for including 70 slides on one page.

*I've been talking about a lot lately is the idea of how individuals inside an organization **"deploy outside the master***

***narrative** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2013/05/05/design-thanking/#face> ". This is a subject larger than cultural heritage institutions or APIs but the nice thing about APIs is that they provide a kind of sanctioned territory for people to explore those ideas. We usually talk about APIs in the service of third parties but they are just as able to be used by people inside the hula hoop and that's important because implicit in publishing an API is the idea that new interfaces will be imagined.*

*This is not true of all APIs since many exist solely to automate rigidly defined processes but to the extent that an organization offers up a more exploratory interface to their service they can't not also accept that people will use it **to reimagine the service***

***itself** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2012/02/14/incentivize/#headless> .*

The other thing about APIs is that they are just another step in the same abstraction that has defined computer programming from day one: That all computer programming is about what you can and can not take for granted.

*Last fall, **Seb** <http://www.sebchan.com/> and I taught a class about "**Museums and the Network** <https://pinboard.in/u:straup/t:museums-and-the-network/> " at Pratt. It became clear during the first class that most of the students were not programmers but that many of them wanted to learn enough to not be caught completely unawares by it. So we re-jiggered things a bit and the second class was devoted not so much to describing variables and scope and functions and the usual shop-talk around programming as it was to trying to explain the principles that span all the gibberish and bickering that most people hear when forced to listen to a group of computer nerds. I started by declaring that "That all computer programming is about what you can and can not take for granted". Which sounds grandiose and important and more often than not demands performing the kind of mental gymnastics required to wrap your head around Alan Turing and binary state machines.*

*Another way of saying the same thing is to ask: "Do you make your own pasta by hand or do you use it ready-made from a box?" Because most of what people know about cooking — inputs, outputs, instructions, environmental conditions, time — can be directly applied to computer programming. Most important of all is the idea that "**language is culture** http://books.google.com/books?id=oJZ5NRmXZQwC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false " is as true in programming as it is in the body politic as it is in cooking.*

Even if people have trouble believing this to be true at a societal level it's difficult to ignore the reality when confronted by a stack of

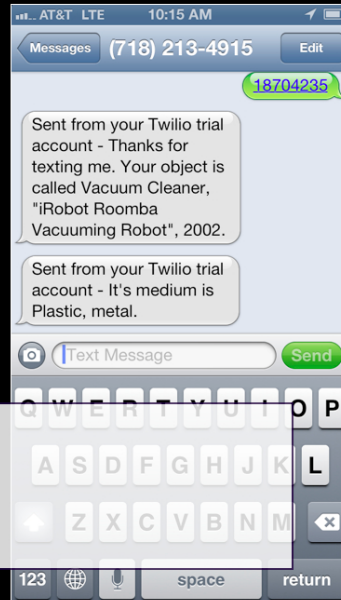
cookbooks. Consider the recipes for Boeuf Bourguignonne as written down by Julia Child, Maureen Evans and Elizabeth David. They're all making the same thing, right?

*Which is why we made Larry Wall's 1999 "**Perl, the first postmodern computer language**" <http://www.perl.com/pub/1999/03/pm.html> " required reading for the class. Which is why APIs.*



718-213-4915

object phone



An aerial photograph of a city neighborhood, likely New York City, showing a mix of historic and modern architecture. A river flows along the bottom left, bordered by a dense line of green trees. The city blocks are filled with buildings of various heights and styles, including a prominent church with a dark roof in the center. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the lower-left portion of the image, containing the text 'labs.cooperhewitt.org' in a bold, dark font.

labs.cooperhewitt.org

Ingredients

- * 1 8 ounce piece chunk bacon
- * 3 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- * 3 pounds lean stew beef, cut into 2-inch cubes
- * 1 onion, sliced
- * Salt and pepper
- * 2 tablespoons flour
- * 3 cups red wine, young and full bodied
- * 3 cups beef stock
- * 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- * 2 cloves mashed garlic
- * 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- * 1 bay leaf, crumbled
- * 20 small white onions
- * 3 1/2 tablespoons butter
- * herb bouquet (4 parsley sprigs, one-half bay leaf, one-quarter teaspoon thyme, tied in cheesecloth)
- * 1 pound fresh mushrooms, quartered

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Remove bacon rind and cut into lardons (sticks 1/4-inch thick and 1 1/2 inches long). Simmer rind and lardons for 10 minutes in 1 1/2 quarts water. Drain and dry.
3. Sauté lardons in 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a flameproof casserole over moderate heat for 2 to 3 minutes to brown lightly. Remove to side dish with a slotted spoon.
4. Heat fat in casserole until almost smoking. Dry beef in paper towels; it will not brown if it is damp. Add beef, a few pieces at a time, and sauté until nicely browned on all sides. Add it to the lardons. In the same fat, brown the sliced vegetables. Pour out the excess fat.
5. Return the beef and bacon to the casserole and toss with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Then sprinkle on the flour and toss again to coat the beef lightly. Set casserole uncovered in middle position of preheated oven for 4 minutes. Toss the meat again and return to oven for 4 minutes (this browns the flour and covers the meat with a light crust). Remove casserole and turn oven down to 325 degrees.
6. Stir in wine and 2 to 3 cups stock, just enough so that the meat is barely covered. Add the tomato paste, garlic, herbs and bacon rind. Bring to a simmer on top of the stove. Cover casserole and set in lower third of oven. Regulate heat so that liquid simmers very slowly for 3 to 4 hours. The meat is done when a fork pierces it easily.
7. While the beef is cooking, prepare the onions and mushrooms. Heat 1 1/2 tablespoons butter with one and one-half tablespoons of the oil until bubbling in a skillet. Add onions and sauté over moderate heat for about 10 minutes, roasting them so they will brown as evenly as possible. Be careful not to break their skins. You cannot expect them to brown uniformly. Add 1/2 cup of the stock, salt and pepper to taste and the herb bouquet. Cover and simmer slowly for 40 to 50 minutes until the onions are perfectly tender but hold their shape, and the liquid has evaporated. Remove herb bouquet and set onions aside.
8. Wipe out skillet and heat remaining oil and butter over high heat. As soon as you see butter has begun to subside, indicating it is hot enough, add mushrooms. Toss and shake pan for 4 to 5 minutes. As soon as they have begun to brown lightly, remove from heat. When the meat is tender, pour the contents of the casserole into a sieve set over a saucepan.
9. Wash out the casserole and return the beef and lardons to it. Distribute the cooked onions and mushrooms on top. Skim fat off sauce in saucepan. Simmer sauce for 1-2 minutes, skimming off additional fat as it rises. You should have about 2 1/2 cups of sauce thick enough to coat a spoon lightly. If too thin, boil it down rapidly. If too thick, mix in a few tablespoons stock. Taste carefully for seasoning.
10. Pour sauce over meat and vegetables. Cover and simmer 2 to 3 minutes, basting the meat and vegetables with the sauce several times. Serve in casserole, or arrange stew on a platter surrounded with potatoes, noodles or rice, and decorated with parsley.

**Julia Child's Bœuf
Bourguignon: Brwn,rmv½c
lardon,2lb beef,carrot&onion.
Flr,s+p. 8m@450F; +2c
pinot&Stock/T tompaste/
BqtGrni. Cvr3h@325F.**

– @cookbook

“Except for sauces, one does not often measure oil by tablespoons. One pours it out of a bottle into the pan. One uses one's eyes and one's loaf.”

– Elizabeth David

**callback
numbers are
just URIs**

or vice versa?

<http://cprhw.tt/o/2CdrM>

“the web”

THE COLLECTION

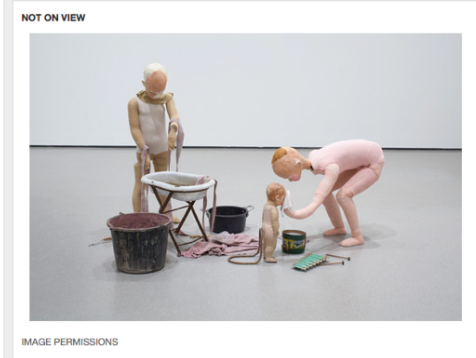
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8,453 Artists and 51,011 Works Online

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Search by Artist, Work, or Keyword ADVANCED SEARCH THUMBNAILS SLIDESHOW LIST SINGLE OBJECT

SEARCH RESULTS
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PREVIOUS NEXT



Cathy Wilkes (Irish, born 1966) SAVE

Untitled

Date: 2012
Medium: Mixed media
Dimensions: Overall dimensions variable
Credit Line: Gift of the Speyer Family Foundation and Mrs. Saidie A. May (by exchange)
MoMA Number: 1788.2012
Copyright: © 2014 Cathy Wilkes

Related Links

Works: [Cathy Wilkes](#) [1]
Department: [Painting and Sculpture](#) [2789]
Classification: [Sculpture](#) [1115]
Date: 2012
Resources: [Library Search \(DADABASE\)](#)
Permalink: [Create a permanent link to this page](#)

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“view source”

U.S.

Snowden Used Low-Cost Tool to Best N.S.A.

By DAVID E. SANGER and ERIC SCHMITT FEB. 8, 2014

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WASHINGTON — Intelligence officials investigating how Edward J. Snowden gained access to a huge trove of the country's most highly classified documents say they have determined that he used inexpensive and widely available software to "scrape" the [National Security Agency's](#) networks, and kept at it even after he was briefly challenged by agency officials.

Using "web crawler" software designed to search, index and back up a website, Mr. Snowden "scraped data out of our systems" while he went about his day job, according to a senior intelligence official. "We do not believe this was an individual sitting at a machine and downloading this much material in sequence," the official said. The process, he added, was "quite automated."


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“cheap software”

```
<meta name="org" content="National Security Agency" />
<meta name="per" content="Snowden, Edward J" />
<meta name="des" content="Computer Security" />
<meta property="article:tag" content="Cyberattacks and
Hackers" />
<meta name="des" content="Cyberattacks and Hackers" />
<meta property="article:tag" content="Classified Information
and State Secrets" />
<meta name="des" content="Classified Information and State
Secrets" />
<meta name="org" content="WikiLeaks" />
<meta property="article:tag" content="Surveillance of
Citizens by Government" />
<meta name="des" content="Surveillance of Citizens by
Government" />
<meta name="keywords" content="National Security
Agency, Snowden, Edward J, Computer Security, Cyberattacks and
Hackers, Classified Information and State
Secrets, WikiLeaks, Surveillance of Citizens by Government" />
```

circa 2003

Who's on first at the New York Times, for [2006-05-03](#)

This document was generated from a [source RDF file](#), last modified 2006-05-03T04:45:05-07:00. But...[what does it mean?](#)

Accidents and Safety

Related Topics

[Airlines and Airplanes](#)
[National Transportation Safety Board](#)
[Ebersol, Dick](#)
[Colorado](#)



Advertising and Marketing

Related Topics

[Cellular Telephones](#)
[Children and Youth](#)
[Diet and Nutrition](#)

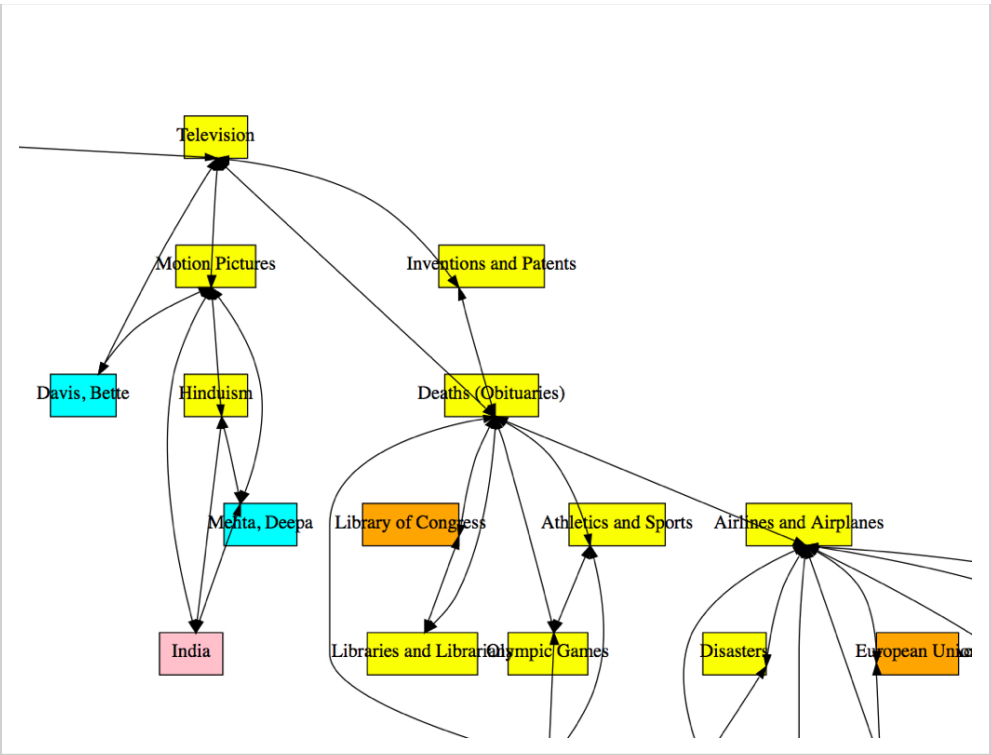


Afghanistan

Related Topics

[Taliban](#)
[Karzai, Hamid](#)

<http://cprhw.tt/p8qj>



Feb 10, 2004



Session

Virtual Worlds, Distributed Interaction: Extending a MMOG with Remote Scripting, IM, Mobiles and REST

[Stewart Butterfield](#), Yahoo! Inc.

[Ben Cerveney](#), Playground Foundation

[Eric Costello](#)

Track: Social Software

Date: Tuesday, February 10

Time: 5:15pm - 6:00pm

Location: California Ballroom B

What happens when you expose the mechanisms for interaction with a massive multiplayer online game as a set of web services APIs and simple out-of-application interfaces for end users? The state of the game world, maintained by a set of server-side processes, becomes a model shared across multiple platforms from which the game world can be accessed. This proliferation of accessibility allows for interactions, which are not confined to a single client, platform or even network, and allows subtler, more pervasive modes of mixing game action and awareness with web, instant messaging and mobile experiences.

RSS feeds include files and remote scripting and can pull data from the game world onto a player's blog or into their own custom-designed game start page. And the same logic can be applied to other applications, allowing interactions between users to transcend the application where their relationship was established. IM bridging -- through "proxybots" -- allows users to chat with their in-application buddies over more mainstream messaging architectures or perform simple commands and queries without loading the client software.

Finally, using a RESTian interface, developer-users in the community can come up with their own applications and make those available to everyone, creating the possibility of ubiquitous availability over the net's heterogeneous patchwork of platforms.

[Download presentation file](#)

A photograph of a projector screen in a room. The screen shows a close-up of a kitten's face with large, white, bold text 'Surprise Kittens' overlaid. The kitten has dark fur with white markings on its face and chest. The background of the screen shows a room with a wooden floor and a white wall. The projector is mounted on a stand, and the room is dimly lit.

Surprise Kittens

“flickr”

XML

SOAP

NAME

Net::Google - simple OOP-ish interface to the Google SOAP API

SYNOPSIS

```
use Net::Google;
use constant LOCAL_GOOGLE_KEY => "*****";

my $google = Net::Google->new(key=>LOCAL_GOOGLE_KEY);
my $search = $google->search();

# Search interface

$search->query(qw(aaron straup cope));
$search->lr(qw(on fr));
$search->starts_at(5);
$search->max_results(15);

map { print $_->title()."\n"; } @{$search->results()};

# or...

foreach my $r (@{$search->response()}) {
    print "Search time :".$r->searchTime()."\n";

    # returns an array ref of Result objects
    # the same as the $search->results() method
    map { print $_->URL()."\n"; } @{$r->resultElements()};
}

# Spelling interface

print $google->spelling(phrase=>"muntreal qwebec")->suggest(),"\n";

# Cache interface

my $cache = $google->cache(url=>"http://search.cpan.org/recent");
print $cache->get();
```

RSS as in “really simple”

Pinboard (straup)

recent bookmarks from straup

[Visualizing Salesforce Data... in Minecraft!? | Developer Force Blog](#)

February 9, 2014 9:44 AM

[Marvel Developer Portal](#)

February 1, 2014 7:23 AM

(Source: <https://twitter.com/hondanhon/status/429471773919158272>)

[Browser Uploads to S3 using HTML POST Forms : Articles & Tutorials : Amazon Web Services](#)

January 23, 2014 4:34 PM

[Geocodio | Ridiculously cheap bulk geocoding](#)

January 21, 2014 10:51 AM

[Documentation - Moves for Developers](#)

January 9, 2014 7:56 AM

<http://www.geonames.org/export/web-services.html#timezone>

December 7, 2013 5:34 PM

[Slack API | Slack](#)

November 27, 2013 7:41 AM

[NYPL Labs Building Inspector: No Sleep Till Brooklyn, API, and Open Source Edition | The New York Public Library](#)

November 19, 2013 5:17 PM

[Lulu - Publishing Projects](#)

October 8, 2013 8:35 AM

The Lulu Publication API allows anybody to create books in any format that Lulu supports, including both physical books and eBooks. Through the API, you can control metadata, from author/title to price and distribution. Once the book has been published through our API, you can direct your users to purchase the book through the published through the API are eligible for distribution to our standard channel partners, which include Amazon, Apple's iBookstore, and a variety of other leading retailers. Client libraries in a variety of languages can be found on github.

[iRobot Roomba Serial Command Interface \(SCI\) Specification](#)

October 2, 2013 9:14 AM

[Issues | GitHub API](#)

September 21, 2013 12:26 PM

```

84 <dc:creator>traup</dc:creator><dc:subject>salesforce api minecraft</dc:subject>
85 <dc:source>http://pinboard.in/</dc:source>
86 <dc:identifier>http://pinboard.in/u:traup/b:474f904b7321/</dc:identifier>
87 <taxo:topics><rdf:Bag> <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:salesforce"/>
88 <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:api"/>
89 <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:minecraft"/>
90 </rdf:Bag></taxo:topics>
91 </item>
92 <item rdf:about="http://developer.marvel.com/">
93 <title>Marvel Developer Portal</title>
94 <dc:date>2014-02-01T12:23:22+00:00</dc:date>
95 <link>http://developer.marvel.com/</link>
96 <dc:creator>traup</dc:creator><dc:description><![CDATA[([Source: https://twitter.com/hondanbon/status/42947173919158272]])></dc:
97 <dc:subject>comix marvel api</dc:subject>
98 <dc:source>http://apple.com/iphone/</dc:source>
99 <dc:identifier>http://pinboard.in/u:traup/b:98974433c20a/</dc:identifier>
100 <taxo:topics><rdf:Bag> <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:comix"/>
101 <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:marvel"/>
102 <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:api"/>
103 </rdf:Bag></taxo:topics>
104 </item>
105 <item rdf:about="https://aws.amazon.com/articles/1434">
106 <title>Browser Uploads to S3 using HTML POST Forms : Articles &amp; Tutorials : Amazon Web Services</title>
107 <dc:date>2014-01-23T21:34:14+00:00</dc:date>
108 <link>https://aws.amazon.com/articles/1434</link>
109 <dc:creator>traup</dc:creator><dc:subject>aws s3 api</dc:subject>
110 <dc:source>http://pinboard.in/</dc:source>
111 <dc:identifier>http://pinboard.in/u:traup/b:95390efe8314/</dc:identifier>
112 <taxo:topics><rdf:Bag> <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:aws"/>
113 <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:api"/>
114 <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:api"/>
115 </rdf:Bag></taxo:topics>
116 </item>
117 <item rdf:about="http://geocod.io/">
118 <title>Geocodio | Ridiculously cheap bulk geocoding</title>
119 <dc:date>2014-01-21T15:51:20+00:00</dc:date>
120 <link>http://geocod.io/</link>
121 <dc:creator>traup</dc:creator><dc:subject>geo api</dc:subject>
122 <dc:source>http://pinboard.in/</dc:source>
123 <dc:identifier>http://pinboard.in/u:traup/b:41f5c50a0a17/</dc:identifier>
124 <taxo:topics><rdf:Bag> <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:geo"/>
125 <rdf:li rdf:resource="http://pinboard.in/u:traup/t:api"/>
126 </rdf:Bag></taxo:topics>
127 </item>
128 <item rdf:about="https://dev.movelabs.com/api/v1/">
129 <title>Documentation - Novus - Novus API</title>
130 <dc:date>2014-01-09T22:56:24+00:00</dc:date>
131 <link>https://dev.movelabs.com/api/v1/</link>
132 <dc:creator>traup</dc:creator><dc:subject>novus api</dc:subject>

```

RSS Description Format...

XML-RPC

XML over HTTP

The App Garden

[Create an App](#) | [API Documentation](#) | [Feeds](#) | [What is the App Garden?](#)

The Flickr API is available for non-commercial use by outside developers. Commercial use is possible by prior arrangement.

Read these first:

- [Developer Guide](#)
- [Overview](#)
- [Encoding](#)
- [User Authentication](#)
- [Dates](#)
- [Tags](#)
- [URLs](#)
- [Buddyicons](#)
- [Flickr APIs Terms of Use](#)

- [API Keys](#)
- [Developers' mailing list](#)

Photo Upload API

- [Uploading Photos](#)
- [Replacing Photos](#)
- [Example Request](#)
- [Asynchronous Uploading](#)

Request Formats

- [REST](#)
- [XML-RPC](#)
- [SOAP](#)

API Methods

activity

- [flickr.activity.userComments](#)
- [flickr.activity.userPhotos](#)

auth

- [flickr.auth.checkToken](#)
- [flickr.auth.getFrob](#)
- [flickr.auth.getFullToken](#)
- [flickr.auth.getToken](#)

auth.oauth

- [flickr.auth.oauth.checkToken](#)
- [flickr.auth.oauth.getAccessToken](#)

blogs

- [flickr.blogs.getList](#)
- [flickr.blogs.getServices](#)
- [flickr.blogs.postPhoto](#)

cameras

- [flickr.cameras.getBrandModels](#)
- [flickr.cameras.getBrands](#)

collections

[flickr.collections.getList](#)

REST



“HTTP is the API”

**GET
POST
PUT
CREATE
DELETE**

(AUTH)

```
110 ->curl -v 'http://collection.cooperhewitt.org'
* Connected to collection.cooperhewitt.org (54.243.235.171) port 80 (#0)
> GET / HTTP/1.1
> User-Agent: curl/7.24.0 (x86_64-apple-darwin12.0) libcurl/7.24.0
  OpenSSL/0.9.8y zlib/1.2.5
> Host: collection.cooperhewitt.org
> Accept: */*
>
< HTTP/1.1 200 OK
< Date: Mon, 10 Feb 2014 11:50:20 GMT
< Server: Apache/2.2.22 (Ubuntu)
< X-Powered-By: PHP/5.3.10-1ubuntu3.9
< X-Who-Am-I: collection.cooperhewitt.org
< Vary: Accept-Encoding
< Content-Length: 23594
< Content-Type: text/html; charset=utf-8
```

“stuff” via the “web”

scaffolding

and dispatch

“www”

“api”

“feeds”

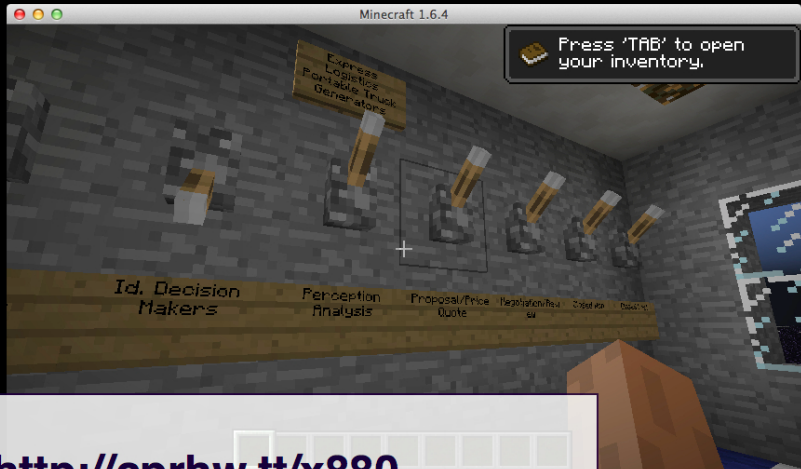
“www”

“api”

“feeds”

your application





<http://cprhw.tt/x880>

**your infrastructure
is not your API**

No more #!

The first thing that you might notice is that permalink URLs are now simpler: they no longer use the hashbang (#!). While hashbang-style URLs have a [handful of limitations](#), our primary reason for this change is to improve initial page-load performance.

When you come to [twitter.com](#), we want you to see content as soon as possible. With hashbang URLs, the browser needs to download an HTML page, download and execute some JavaScript, recognize the hashbang path (which is only visible to the browser), then fetch and render the content for that URL. By removing the need to handle routing on the client, we remove many of these steps and reduce the time it takes for you to find out what's happening on [twitter.com](#).

<http://cprhw.tt/k489>

?format=lolcode

HAI

IM IN UR BUCKETS MAKING UP FORMATS

GIMME UPLOADS FROM EVERYONE

I CAN HAS PHOTO DSC_0035

ITZ AT <http://www.flickr.com/photos/38512987@N08/12425318175/>
INVISIBLE METADATA

LOL

KTHX.

I CAN HAS PHOTO PAPALUA SUNSET

ITZ AT <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mfeingol/12425318625/>
INVISIBLE METADATA

LOL

KTHX.

I CAN HAS PHOTO

ITZ AT <http://www.flickr.com/photos/licibev/12425319485/>
INVISIBLE METADATA

LOL

KTHX.

I CAN HAS PHOTO BLACK HILLS WACIPI 2012 GRAND ENTRY

ITZ AT <http://www.flickr.com/photos/claricelakota/12425319885/>
INVISIBLE METADATA

LOL

KTHX.

I CAN HAS PHOTO UPLOAD

ITZ AT <http://www.flickr.com/photos/47584511@N05/12425320075/>
INVISIBLE METADATA

LOL

KTHX.

<http://cprhw.tt/fyp6>

the illusion of automation

(or: I think Rueben is wrong)

Unfortunately, you've been lied to. Or more precisely, you got what you asked for.

Because I bet that you were the one who ultimately decided: **yes, I need an API!**

No, you don't. It's the same content, why would you need two interfaces, just because your consumers speak different languages?

Do you also exclusively phone your Spanish customers, e-mail Italian colleagues, and fax your Dutch friends? That would be really crazy and utterly unnecessary.

Yet it's exactly what you're doing if you add an API to your website.

Your website can **serve people and automated clients in the exact same way.**

And it's not difficult. But let's first look at how things went so horribly wrong.

[**http://cprhw.tt/ld5n**](http://cprhw.tt/ld5n)

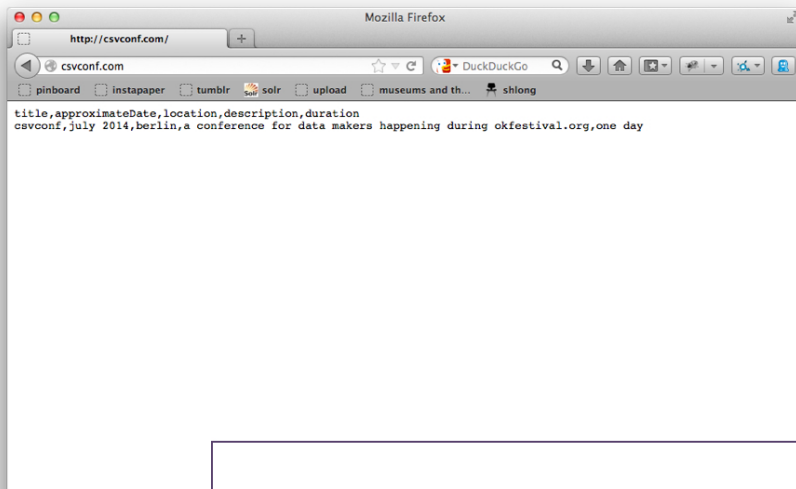
get info
get list
search
export

get info

~~get list~~

~~search~~

export



<http://cprhw.tt/r343>

branch: master

collection / objects / 183 / 823 / 91 / 18382391.json

2 months ago November 2013 release (beta; 80% of collection)

1 contributor

file87 lines (87 sloc)2.715 kb

OpenEditRawBlameHistoryDelete

```
1 {
2   "id": "18382391",
3   "tms: id": "101319",
4   "accession number": "1949-49-35",
5   "title": "Figure, \"Cat and kitten\", late 19th\\u2013early 20th century",
6   "url": "http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/18382391/",
7   "department_id": "35347497",
8   "period_id": null,
9   "media_id": "35376113",
10  "type_id": "35237189",
11  "date": "Late 19th\\u2013early 20th century",
12  "year_start": 1900,
13  "year_end": 1915,
14  "year_acquired": "1949",
15  "decade": null,
16  "woe: country": "23424750",
17  "medium": "Painted brass",
18  "markings": null,
19  "signed": null,
20  "inscribed": null,
21  "provenance": null,
22  "dimensions": "H x W x D: 6.8 x 3.8 x 3.6 cm (2 11\\16 x 1 1\\2 x 1 7\\16 in.)",
23  "creditline": "Gift of Anonymous donor",
24  "description": "Gray, black, and white tabby cat standing on hind legs holds an upraised stick above a meowing kitten lying",
25  "justification": null,
26  "type": {
27    "id": "35237189",
28    "name": "Figure"
29  },
30  "images": [
31  ]
32 }
```

http://cprhw.tt/b56j

cooperhewitt.objects.getInfo

[API documentation](#) [API methods](#) [Create a new API key](#) [Your API keys](#) [Your access tokens](#)

cooperhewitt.objects.getInfo

Return detailed information for an object in our collection.

Method

GET

Arguments

- **access_token** — A valid OAuth2 access token required
- **id** — A valid Cooper-Hewitt object ID.
- **accession_number** — A valid Cooper-Hewitt accession number.
- **extras** — A comma-separated list of additional information to include with the object. Valid extras are: color, collocation, formstone

http://cprhw.tt/fnkj

Notes

- You MUST pass either a valid object ID or accession number. Object IDs take precedence.

Example request

```
curl -X GET https://api.collection.cooperhewitt.org/rest/ \
  ?method=cooperhewitt.objects.getInfo \
  &access_token=<TOKEN> \
  &id=<ID> \
  &accession_number=<ACCESSION_NUMBER> \
  &extras=<EXTRAS>
```

```
$> curl https://  
api.collection.cooperhewitt.org/rest/?  
method=cooperhewitt.objects.getInfo  
fo&id=18382391&access_token=SEC  
RET
```

```
$> curl -H 'Accept: application/json'  
https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/  
objects/18382391/
```


magic vs clarity

```
{  
  "object": {  
    "accession_number": "1949-49-35",  
    "creditline": "Gift of Anonymous Donor",  
    "date": "late 19th\u2013early 20th century",  
    "decade": null,  
    "department_id": "35347497",  
    "description": "Gray, black, and white tabby cat standing on hind legs holds an  
upraised stick above a mewling kitten lying across its knee, as if in the act of  
spanking.",  
    "dimensions": "H x W x D: 6.8 x 3.8 x 3.6 cm (2 11/16 x 1 1/2 x 1 7/16 in.)",  
    "id": "18382391",  
    ... and so on
```

<http://cprhw.tt/b56j>

get info
get list
search
export

Apache Solr vs ElasticSearch - the Feature Smackdown!

solr-vs-elasticsearch.com

pinboard instapaper tumblr solr upload museums and th... shlong

solr-vs-elasticsearch.com

DuckDuckGo

Apache Solr vs ElasticSearch

The Feature Smackdown

API

Feature	Solr 4.4	ElasticSearch 0.90.0.RC1
Format	XML,CSV,JSON	JSON
HTTP REST API	✓	✓
Binary API	✓ SolrJ	✓ TransportClient, Thrift (through a plugin)
JMX support	✓	✗ ES specific stats are exposed through the REST API
Client libraries	PHP, Ruby, Perl, Scala, Python, .NET, Javascript	PHP, Ruby, Perl, Scala, Python, .NET, Javascript, Erlang, Clojure
3rd-party product integration (open-source)	Drupal, Magento, Django, ColdFusion, Wordpress, OpenCMS, Plone, Joomla, ez Publish, S...	Drupal, Django, Symfony2, Wordpress

<http://cprhw.tt/wqr2>

(AUTH)

Automatic deadbolt
Turn to engage privacy



Create a new access token for yourself

[API documentation](#) · [API methods](#) · [Create a new API key](#) · [Your API keys](#) · [Your access tokens](#)

Name

Permissions

Make this token valid

until I revoke it

for one hour

for six hours

for a day

for one week

for a month

<http://cprhw.tt/2ygb>

```
wwms-phone.py Python ↻ ↺

1  #!/usr/bin/env python
2
3  import sys
4  import os
5  from flask import Flask, request, redirect
6  from twilio import twiml
7  import cooperhewitt.api.client
8
9  token = os.environ['CH_API_KEY']
10
11  app = Flask(__name__)
12
13  @app.route('/')
14  def micah():
15
16      api = cooperhewitt.api.client.OAuth2(token)
17      rsp = api.call('cooperhewitt.labs.whatWouldMicahSay')
18
19      micah = rsp['micah']
20      says = micah['says']
21
22      r = twiml.Response()
23      r.say(says)
24      return str(r)
25
26  if __name__ == '__main__':
27
28      if not os.environ.get('CH_API_KEY', False):
29          print "You forgot to set your CH_API key as an environment variable"
30          sys.exit(1)
31
32      rsp = micah()
33      print rsp
```

<http://cprhw.tt/f3t2>


```
wwms-phone.py Python ↻ ⏪ ⏩

1  #!/usr/bin/env python
2
3  import sys
4  import os
5  from flask import Flask, request, redirect
6  from twilio import twiml
7  import cooperhewitt.api.client
8
9  token = os.environ['CH_API_KEY']
10
11 app = Flask(__name__)
12
13 @app.route('/')
14 def micah():
15     api = cooperhewitt.api.client.GAuth2(token)
16     rsp = api.call('cooperhewitt.labs.whatWouldMicahSay')
17
18     micah = rsp['micah']
19     says = micah['says']
20
21     r = twiml.Response()
22     r.say(says)
23     return r.generate()
24
25
26 if __name__ == '__main__':
27
28     if not os.environ.get('CH_API_KEY', False):
29         print "You forgot to set your CH API key as an environment variable"
30         sys.exit()
31
32     rsp = micah()
33     print rsp
```

fierce-reef-7020

Run Production Check



Dynos

web gunicorn wms:app

1x ▼

1

\$0.00

worker python wms.py

1x ▼

0

\$0.00

Add-ons



Get Add-ons

Apply Changes

Est. Monthly Cost

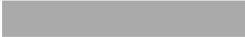
\$0.00

<http://cprhw.tt/yl9t>



East Bay Mn Piedmont Oacz, CA US

Properties

Sid
Number 

Voice

Request URL ⓘ

https://fierce-reef-7020.herokuapp.com/

POST ▾

View Calls (Inbound | Outbound)

Messaging

Request URL ⓘ

https://fierce-reef-7020.herokuapp.com/sms

GET ▾

View Messages (Inbound | Outbound)

Save

Cancel

646-663-4052



USERS

thank you



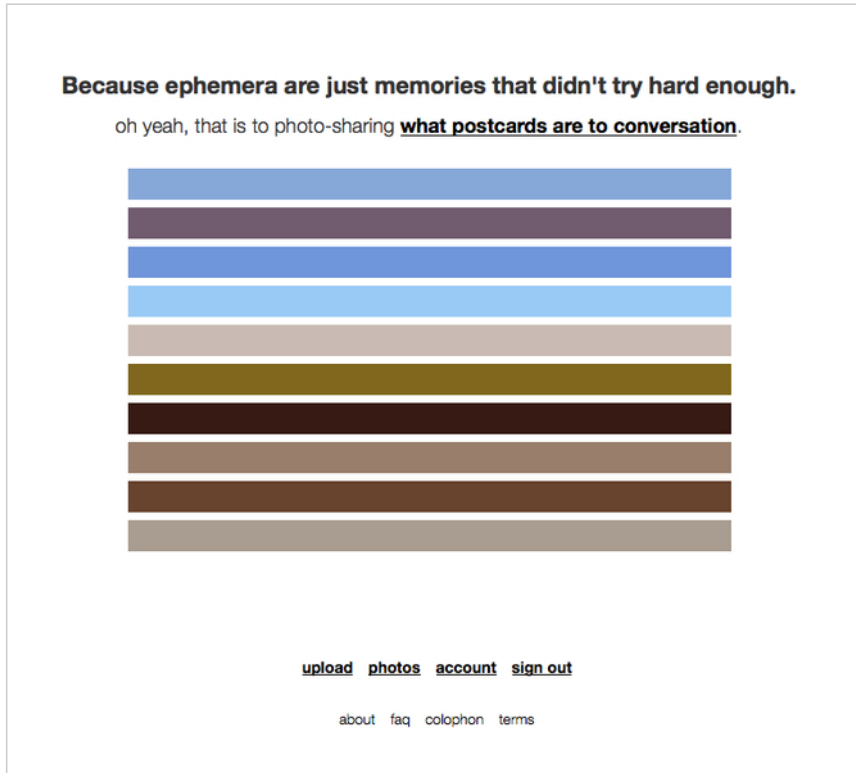
2014-02-10



**because ephemera are just
memories that didn't try hard
enough**

oh yeah, that

oh yeah, that

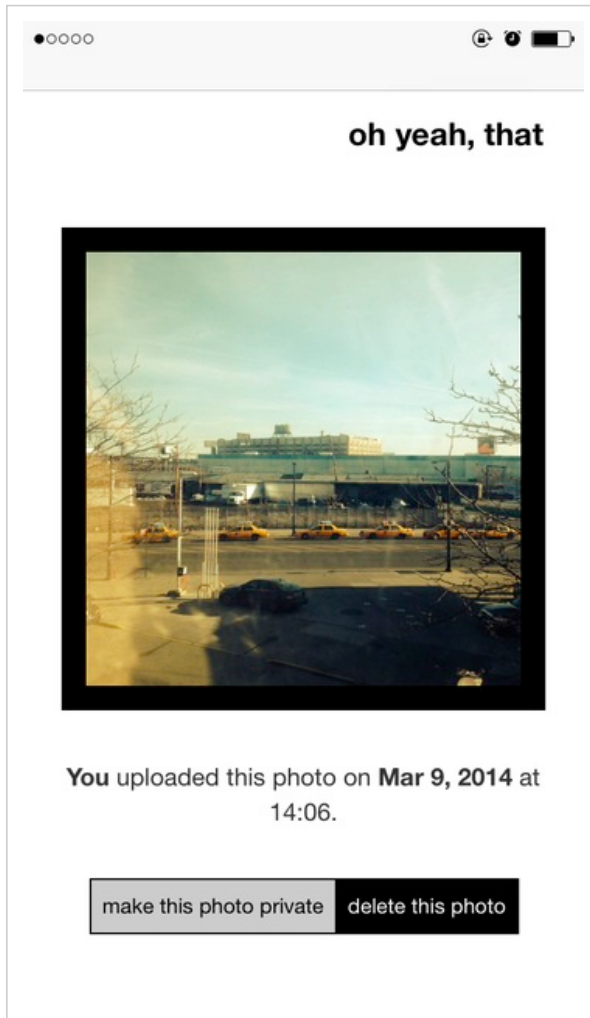


One thousand five hundred and ninety
days. <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2009/11/06/thatissall/#flickr>

That's how long it took to work up the stamina to build something that looks more like a photo-sharing website than not. It is probably not the photo-sharing website that most people want. It might be the photo-sharing website that some people didn't know they wanted. All I know anymore is no one is building the photo-sharing website that I want to use.

Which is kind of annoying because I am **trying to re-open a goddamn museum** <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/conversations/2013/04/03/meet-staff-aaron-straup-cope> and I don't really have time to (re) build the photo-

sharing website that I thought we'd already built once before. Despite what people will have you believe these days photo-sharing never stopped being a hard problem. So I haven't built that.



Instead I've built the thing that **Matthew Rothenberg** <http://mroth.info/> and I joked about making while we stood around with a bunch of people last fall trying to decide where to go eat. We described it as "*TimeHop for SnapChat*". It's an application that lets you upload

photos but which then prevents you from seeing them for a year.

Here is the text from the site's About page.

oh yeah, that allows you to upload and store photos but with a twist:
You can't see or share any of those photos for a year.

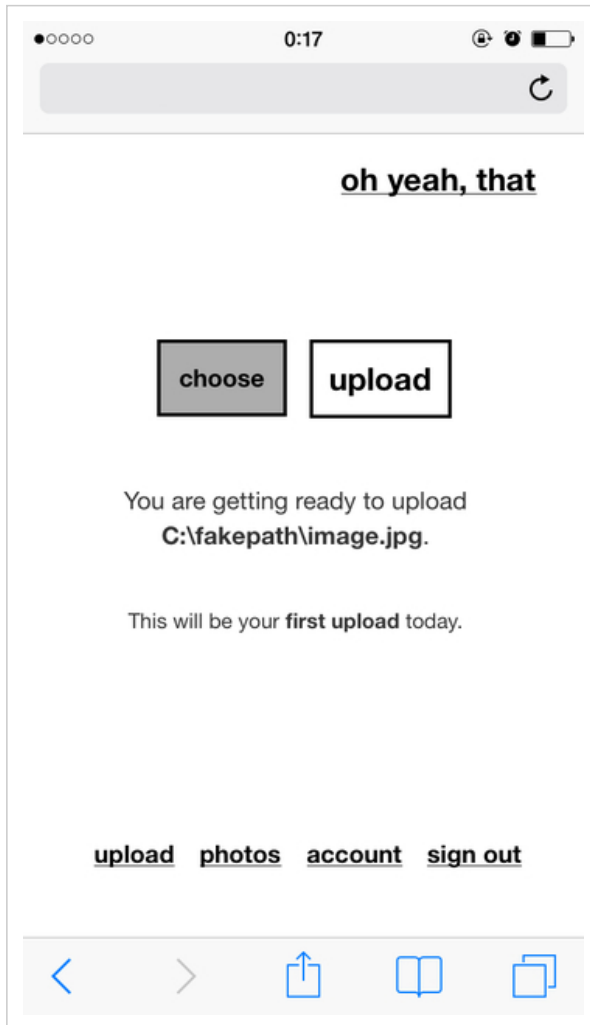
Once a year has passed you'll be sent an email with a link to that photo. By default all photos remain private to you but once it becomes viewable you can make the photo public and share it as you please. The photos you upload can be deleted at any time regardless of whether they've been made public yet.

You can always see a list of all the photos you've uploaded organized by date and including **a swatch containing the primary colour** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/giv-do/> for each photo.

oh yeah, that does not have "friends" or "followers". It is deliberately simple-minded that way. There are only public and private photos but you will be able to create something that looks and feels like a guest-pass for sharing photos that would otherwise remain private with a fixed set of people.

It's a pretty silly idea on the surface but I think that the success of applications like **TimeHop** <http://www.timehop.com/> or **PhotoJojo's Photo Time Capsule** <http://photojojo.com/timecapsule/> demonstrate that people value having the past gently nudge its way back in to the present, like an unexpected postcard from a friend. When you are that same friend knowing that you are writing to your future-self it feels like there is the possibility to extend an otherwise tiny surface area of interaction far beyond its immediate borders simply by the nature of its constraints.

When I look at tools like SnapChat I see the same basic phenomenon, just sped up. I also see people reacting against the tyranny of "experience" that too-often seems to define applications these days.



The belief that a tool needs to be greedier and greedier of a person's time and attention in order to... well, that's the question I suppose. The net result are tools that, whatever the motive or lack thereof, feel like their sole aim is to *become* the activity rather than complementing the things people are already doing.

When you look at things this way it's easy to understand the popularity around the idea of "ephemerality" or applications whose demands on your attention are designed to self-destruct. It is worth noting that the SnapChat kids are able to **articulate a rhetoric around an idea of ephemerality** <http://blog.snapchat.com/post/55902851023/temporary-social-media> that is at least a compelling argument and not the usual breathless buzzword bingo about the attention economy or disrupting the memory paradigm.

We also know that if people to do anything — and I mean anything, no matter how trivial it seems in the moment — for a sustained amount of time they will want a record, a proof, of that activity. Which is why I am fond of saying that *ephemera are just memories that didn't try hard enough*.

How much does it cost?

Currently oh yeah, that is free to use. In the future there might be a small one-time or annual fee to use the site (something along the lines of what **pinboard.in** <https://pinboard.in/about/> does) but nothing has been decided yet.

How do I upload photos?

Photos are uploaded via the website. On a desktop computer that means uploading photos that you've already taken. On most new-ish phones these days the browser's file upload button will allow users to either choose an image from their photo album or access the phone's camera directly.

How many photos can I upload?

You can upload up to 10 photos per day. That may change for paid and unpaid accounts. I haven't decided.

How big can my photos be?

Currently uploads are capped at 5MB per photo.

Do you keep my original photos?

No. Photos are scaled down to a maximum 1024 pixels on either dimension before they are saved. Your original photos are not kept after they've been resized.

Can I export my photos?

Yes. You can export all the metadata for your photos as a CSV file. The CSV file will contain URLs for individual photo that have become "viewable" at the time of the export.

Why can't I see a photo until a year after it's been uploaded?

Because those are the rules.

How will I know when a photo becomes viewable after a year?

You will be sent an email containing a link to the photo. The photo will also become "viewable" on the website.

Will anyone be able to see a photo once it becomes viewable?

No. By default all photos are private and only viewable by the person who uploads them. Once a photo becomes viewable you may make a photo publicly viewable but that's really up to you.

How can I share a photo once it's become public?

That sort of sharing is left to the discretion of individual users using the tools of their choosing (email, Twitter, whatever). Features to help

accommodate those services will be considered on a case by case basis but the basic unit of "currency" when it comes to sharing things is a link.

Can I add someone as a contact on the site?

Nope.

Can you geotag photos?

Not yet. Maybe. It gets complicated fast.

Is there an API?

Yes. It's not available yet for general use but it is the same API that the site uses already and will be made public shortly.

Is there a native mobile app?

No. There might be at some point (for example once the API is made public) but until then the site itself should be perfectly useable on a modern-ish mobile web browser.

Can I invite someone I know to use the site?

Not yet, but eventually yes.

Are there specific terms of service?

Yes, and you should make sure to read them.

Who made this?

Aaron Straup Cope <http://www.aaronstraupcope.com/> .

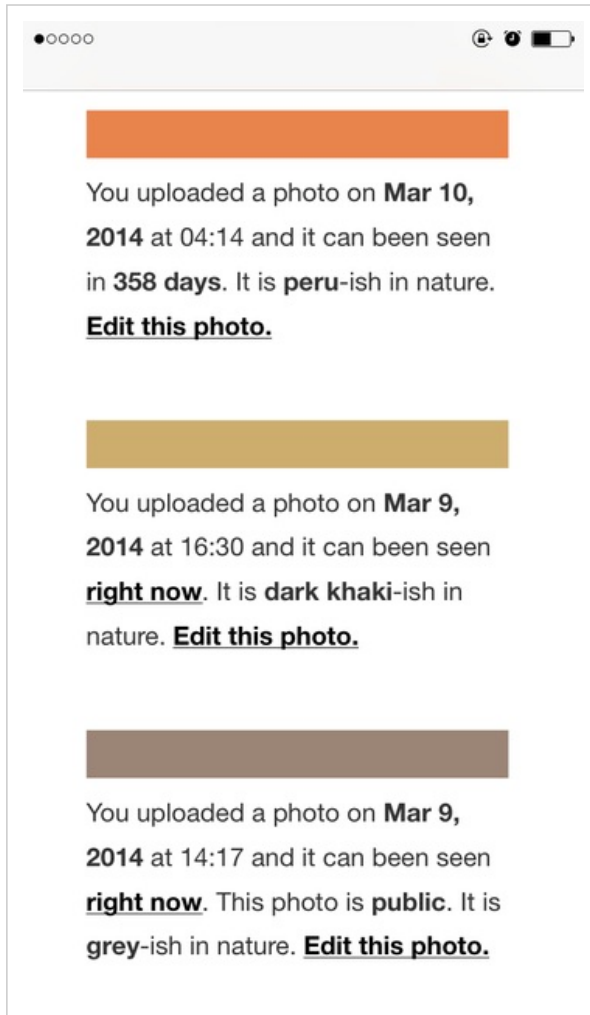
Why?

Like many things it started out a joke; a scenario for an absurd service.

Like many things that start out as jokes it started to seem like more and more of an interesting idea. It's a service that I think I'd like to use so I built it to find out.

The site is live but I'm not giving out the URL or accepting general sign ups yet. I've invited a handful of people to try it out and help me understand what works and what doesn't. This is actually a service that I could imagine running for strangers, so to speak, but since **the bulk of my time is occupied with other things** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/> I'm going to take it slowly.

In the meantime the name itself may change as I put off registering `ohyeahthat.com` long enough that it's owned by a domain squatter now and I can't be bothered to find out what it would cost to buy it from them.



There is at least a year until some of the questions the site raises become germane which kind of nice.

During that time maybe someone else will build their own version and welcome all the users with open arms and reap all the glory and rewards and that's okay. Right now, I am more interested in building the thing that I want first and second thinking about ways that it can still be sustainable long enough that people can warm up to the idea over time. Dealing with the "hockey stick" growth problem is genuinely fun and exciting but most things, many of them really *good* things, will

never have that problem and that shouldn't mean they die on the vine.

Courting world domination has always struck me as a kind of perverse lack of faith in one's own customers. A belief that sooner or later they will grow tired of a product and that the overhead that has accrued around those users will collapse and crush the company itself so there always needs to be a steady stream of customers to cover costs. It's certainly happened before and it is probably the safe bet overall but I choose to believe there are alternatives.

I am pretty easy to contact online so if you're interested in trying out the site then drop me a line and I will add you to the next round of people to receive invite codes.



2014-03-15



Things I have written elsewhere #1396539000

Collecting the present / digital code and...

Collecting the present / digital code and collections

*This is a paper that **Sebastian Chan** <http://www.sebchan.com/> and I wrote for the **Museums and the Web 2014 conference** <http://mw2014.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/collecting-the-present-digital-code-and-collections/> .*

"...their capacity to be accepted evidence" - Henry Lowood

In this paper, Aaron Cope and Seb Chan discuss the acquisition of code and ‘living software’ for the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum and explore its implications for the future of collecting and conserving digital objects and systems more intangible in their nature than not.

Beginning in 2013 with the addition of an iPad app, called Planetary, Cope and Chan have been working to update the museum’s collection to include born-digital examples of design. Unlike other museums, the approach that Cope and Chan have taken is novel – and natively digital – in that it has collected the ‘final version of the ‘object’ along with earlier versions, change logs, and bug reports in a manner that enables their active exploration and use. Further, working with the donors/designers, the code itself has been open sourced specifically as a preservation strategy in and of itself. The original codebase now exists printed using the approved OCR-A font on acid-free archival paper in a climate controlled warehouse – as well as on GitHub where it can be ‘read’, downloaded and freely modified. Additionally the Cooper-

Hewitt has invited the general public to "port" the source code to operating systems other than iOS 4.0 on which the last release of Planetary was developed.

Additionally, Planetary was acquired as much for its merits as an isolated design object as it was for the issues raised around the acquisition process, legal rights, source code repositories as preservation tools, emulation vs hardware vs concept propagation, collectivised ownership and preservation, and the intersection of curatorial practice and digital workers in museums.

Cope's previous years at Flickr drove him towards the creation of Parallel Flickr, a service that creates a mirror copy of a personal Flickr photostream complete with user comments. This is partially detailed in Cope & Donahue (2012). Cope has also made PrivateSquare (for archiving FourSquare check-ins) and contends that the same model of repurposing a public-facing API can be used to create a reasonably functional mirror of any commercial service, should the API be thorough enough. Chan approaches preservation from a media studies perspective having been previously interested in how to preserve the 'essence' of a musical performance, and the 'style' of a subculture, and the use of multi-sensory memory triggers in exhibition design.

Institutional context

The popularity of 'design' in the early 21st century and its transformation from an adjective to a verb offers museums who describe themselves as 'design museums' a series of affordances unlike those of

art museums and history museums that remain bound to 'hero objects'. Lucas Verweij (2013) writes

"The word "design" previously denoted a position on style. Alessi produced "design" coffee pots and Dieter Rams created "designed" electrical appliances for Braun. The term was reserved for intensive and often Modernist-looking products that you bought in museum shops. Back then design was still an adjective, not a verb. In the Anglo-Saxon world, by contrast, design was a container term for all sorts of creative disciplines. That definition has since gained in popularity and all creative professions are now grouped under the umbrella of design. Everything has become design, and design is everywhere. Apart from that semantic victory, the popularity of the profession is such that it is now absorbing and assimilating other professions. No longer is its scope confined to interior, graphic or product design. Now it also encompasses social, interaction and d design. Then we have design thinking and service design, the end products of which can be a service, a mentality or a procedure. That widens the scope of design further to include process, distribution, retail and organisation."

In a design collections, then, there is a growing tolerance, even an embrace of a 'post-objects' curatorial practice - in part to begin to embrace this broader, more populist notion of design.

Discussing MOMA's acquisition of the @ symbol, Senior Curator of Architecture and Design, Paola Antonelli (2010) writes

"The acquisition of @ takes one more step. It relies on the assumption that physical possession of an object as a requirement for an acquisition is no longer necessary, and therefore it sets curators free to tag the world and acknowledge things that "cannot be had" —because they are too big (buildings, Boeing 747's, satellites), or because they are in the air and belong to everybody and to no one, like the @—as art objects befitting MoMA's collection ... Tino Sehgal's Kiss presents interesting affinities with @ in that it is mutable and open to interpretation (the different typefaces one can use) yet still remains the same in its essence: it does not declare itself a work of design, but rather reveals its design power through use; it is immaterial and synthetic, and therefore does not add unnecessary "weight" to the world. A big difference between the two pieces is the price, which brings to an extreme the evanescent difference between art and design. Being in the public realm, @ is free. It might be the only truly free—albeit not the only priceless—object in our collection."

Even these 'post-objects', it turns out have accession numbers (in MOMA's case. 151.2010), weight and subject to institutional claim. Their presence in a museum's collection becomes instrumental.

The Victoria & Albert Museum's rapid response collecting strategy is important, too, as it signifies a major institution's shift to acknowledge that the environment for, and purpose of collecting objects has shifted towards 'instrumentality'. No longer can objects be collected simply for their long term significance (or scarcity), but for what the conversations that they enable the museum to engage in the contemporary moment.

Senior Curator of Contemporary Architecture, Design and

Digital, Kieran Long (2013), explains,

"The rapid response collecting strategy is a new strand to the V&A museum's collections policy, which can respond very quickly to events relevant to design and technology. The traditional way that the V&A collects objects is based on the idea that an object would prove its value over time by becoming a part of design history, being frequently cited in books and so on. These ways of proving an item's value obviously take time. We felt that the world works a little bit differently these days. There are global events that take place and have a bearing on the world of design and manufacturing, which give certain objects a certain relevance at that moment.". In some other museums these 'useful' objects may previously have been included in the remit of Education teams, but rarely accessioned into permanent collections and thus invisible to scholars (and collection databases)."

For all the debate surrounding the intangible nature the "@" symbol and its inclusion in MoMA's collection it is still an object that can be made manifest in a discrete canonical representation. The ability for the "@" symbol to be reproduced in a variety of materials or typographers may confuse the idea that museums are in the business of collecting singular masterpieces but this dilemma has been at the root of design collections since the beginning of the industrial revolution, if not before.

The larger issue facing design museums is that more and more of the products "made" by design practitioners now lack any form at all. There include things like systems design, service design, experience design and interaction design which are, as Verweij points out, core to

our understanding of design but which often lack anything resembling a material form which might be collected or exhibited. Further given the volume of draft or process evidence - usually artificially distinguished in collections as 'archives' - that may accompany something like a systems design, museums will probably soon be forced to contemplate exhibiting those documentary archives, and their finding aids, as the objects themselves.

Collecting and preserving design - not just the digital elements - but the field as a whole is beginning to resemble the preservation of 'intangible heritage' (tnote1).

The Cooper-Hewitt, which is in the final stages of undergoing a physical transformation from a decorative arts museum located inside a historic mansion house, into a 'national design museum' is grappling with many of these issues. The origins of the Cooper Hewitt's historical collections share parallels with the new instrumentalist collecting practice of the V&A. The two wealthy Hewitt sisters collected from Western Europe, principally France and Italy, to build a collection that would enable the teaching and transferral of decorative arts making and production skills. In Eleanor Hewitt's 'Making the Modern Museum' pamphlet of 1919 she writes (Hewitt, 1919), "the salient point is, that the objects are there for use, to be worked from, and, if so desired, to be removed from their positions and placed in any light ... Naturally constant use will have a tendency to damage, even destroy certain objects ... but ... if in that time an artistic tradition passed on ... the existence or non-existence of these objects will not seriously matter, and during all that time the Museum will have been fulfilling its destiny".

More than ever before, Eleanor Hewitt's desire to see a museum's collection used and made useful, is able to realised.

Planetary: the Object

Planetary was the first product of a short-lived company called Bloom, which operated out of San Francisco between 2011 and 2012. Founded by Ben Cervený, Tom Carden and Jesper Andersen the company sought to work with leading artists and technologists in the field of data visualization to create small, tailored and elegant applications to depict and make meaningful the ever-increasing amount of data and metadata that shadows and often defines individuals in their day-to-days lives. Writing at the time of the company's launch Cervený said:

"We're building a series of bite-sized applications (instruments) that bring the richness of game interactions and the design values of motion graphics to the depth and breadth of social network activity, locative tools, and streaming media services. . . . These Bloom Instruments aren't merely games or graphics. They're new ways of seeing what's important."

The first of these products was Planetary, an application which would represent a user's music collection as a series of solar systems and galaxies. For this project Bloom began to work with the artist and designer Robert Hodgin, who would soon go on to join the company as Creative Director. During the company's short lifespan Planetary would be downloaded over 3 million times and remains available to users, via Apple's AppStore, today.

Planetary visualizes a user's music library as a series of celestial bodies. Songs are moons, albums are planets, artists are suns—and the orbits of each are determined by the length of albums and tracks. Their brightness represents their frequency of playback; songs and artists played less frequently than others drift further and further away, over time, from the planets or suns they orbit. Planetary is also a working music player and the time it takes for a moon to orbit a planet is governed by the length of the track that moon represents. The surfaces of planets and moons are modeled dynamically by using random sampling of a recordings "album" art to generate 3D terrains. Writing on the Bloom website, Hodgin describes the process of rendering planet surfaces this way:

- 1. Grab a rectangular block of pixels from around the center of the album art. The size and position of the block you grab would be based on the number of tracks that album has combined with a integer representation of the album name. This way, the planet representing Stateless's album 'Matilda' should look the same on my iPad as it does on yours. If the album art is missing, we skip right to step 3.*
- 2. Make it a mirror image by doubling the image but horizontally reversing one side. This is a quick and easy way to deal with the seam line that what would appear if you just used the non-mirrored version. The seams are still there but their impact*

is minimized by the mirroring.

- 3. To make the planet surface a bit more rugged and rough, we add in some additional texture directly on the image. This additional texture is derived from images provided by NASA. We use combinations of photos taken of the surface of Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars and the cloud patterns from Jupiter. These extra details are burned into our album art graphic.*
- 4. Finally, we add a cloud layer. As we haven't found a fast enough way to do dynamic clouds (maybe on the iPad 3 or 4?) we ended up using prepared graphics of the earth's cloud layer, some modified images from NASA's Blue Marble venture, and some zoomed and cropped textures from our own Flickr images. This cloud layer is actually rendered as a separate slightly larger sphere so it can rotate independent of the planet. The moons are done similarly. The moon textures are even smaller crops from different parts of the original album art. So with the above example for the Matilda album, you might end up with moons that are solid red orbiting next to a moon that is purple with a blue stripe.*

Acquiring Planetary simply a graphic design object would have been relatively straightforward but would have sacrificed an important element of the application: the interaction design and experience of manipulating and affecting a dynamic three dimensional system using a touchable interface. Additionally we would have forfeited the opportunity to examine how those sorts of intangible properties are best preserved at all.

Planetary: Process

All of these issues were relevant not least because with the release of iOS 7, approximately six months after the acquisition was completed, Planetary stopped working on iPads which were upgraded to use Apple's then-newest operating system.

So, as part of the preservation strategy for the acquisition we open sourced the code that runs Planetary. We chose the liberal Berkeley Software Distribution (BSD) license which allows users to freely download, modify and redistribute copies of Planetary without first requiring the consent of the Cooper-Hewitt or the donors. The choice of the open-source license was as deliberate as the choice to open source to code itself.

The source code was published using the Git version control system on the GitHub service. Using a version control system like Git allows the Cooper-Hewitt to preserve a single authorial copy of the source code while still offering a way for scholars and amateurs alike to download and investigate and even alter replicas without requiring

additional museum resources or incurring the risk of damage to the original "object" in our collection.

The choice to both enable and encourage derivative works of Planetary was, and continues to be, seen as fundamental to our efforts to preserve “Planetary the software system” as opposed to “Planetary the iPad application”. Because of all the complexities inherent in preserving hardware and software systems, we are hoping that third party developers will translate the design and intent of Planetary to other systems, for example Google's Android mobile operating system or to the JavaScript and WebGL programming environments found in modern web browsers.

We hope that by fostering a first attempt to develop strategies to bridge the technical and conceptual gaps separating past and present software development we will provide an example for how to continue this process in the future. The benefits accrued by the ability for software and hardware industries to frequently "shed their skin" and start anew still outweigh the costs and so that is the landscape in which museums will continue to try and preserve objects in for the foreseeable future. To that end we see the ability and freedom for third parties to play and experiment with - to become comfortable and familiar with - Planetary's source code as integral to any efforts to recruit developers in our preservation aims. Will some of what we see be still-born or not in line with the museum's thinking? Probably. Will they be worth it in the long run? We choose to believe so.

We are also fortunate to be able to have an ongoing relationship

with the donors in particular Tom Carden, the former CTO of Bloom, who has agreed, for a time, to review and decide whether any third-party contributions fulfill the spirit of Planetary. In that way we see the acquisition as an ongoing process, or a living document. We hope that this sort of close collaborations with living artists and designers can help both museums and the public better understand the issues and identify the priorities when collecting and preserving complex and interdependent systems. We believe that these types of acquisitions will increasingly become the norm for all museums.

We see both the software and hardware that Planetary were last designed for as simply being the then-best representation of the application. That Planetary ran on an iPad 2 running iOS 4.0 tells us something about the historical circumstances under which the application was created but we do not think that these facts define what Planetary is or was trying to be. Had Bloom survived longer as a company they would have almost certainly released an Android version of Planetary and then what? Which one would we have acquired? Both of them? Only the iOS version because it is not so much the genesis of the project but the first manifestation of it? What if the Android version, by virtue of whatever hardware or operating system level optimizations it enjoyed, better embodied the spirit of the project?

Curator for History of Science & Technology Collections, Film & Media at Stanford University Libraries, Henry Lowood (2013), writes:

"There is also anecdotal evidence from museum and other exhibitions that visitors who did not grow up with historical computer technology prefer to use and experience updated versions. In light of these various observations, it is difficult to argue that a digital repository should be preoccupied with delivery of the Authentic Experience as part of its core mission. A better use of limited resources would be to insure that validated software artifacts and associated contextual information are available to researchers who are inclined to do this work on a case-by-case basis. Put bluntly, digital repositories should consider the Authentic Experience as more of a reference-point than a deliverable, as a research problem rather than a repository problem."

Consider the following hypothetical question: Should the temples at Angkor Wat, in Cambodia, be restored using 3D printed materials or holograms or laser-etched stones? Neither are solutions as far-fetched as they may seem at first. When you consider that the original temples were built using any and all available technologies at the time (including the availability of cheap labour) in the service of the temple as a finished work do we not simply fetishize the hand-crafted nature of its production by refusing to consider a mechanical reproduction? Most things were constructed by hand at the time the temples were built but given access to contemporary tools and technologies what might those same architects and builders have constructed? The point of asking the question is not to suggest, definitively, that we should restore Angkor Wat with 3D printed materials but to point out that the question forces us to be able to articulate what we are trying to preserve and to account for and judge the how of the preservation methods accordingly.

Planetary: Curatorial file

Archival approaches attempt to collect as much context at the time of acquisition, in a way that museums often do not. The Australian National Film & Sound Archive, in collecting interactive media from Australia companies, artists and creators requests in its Deliverables Deed considerable additional material alongside the work itself.

“Where a Deliverables Deed is in place, requested materials include the work plus a range of documentation and information (such as an Electronic Press Kit [EPK] and scripts). To suitably support archiving a complex digital object, a range of additional materials (documenting and supporting the work itself) are also likely to be required. These include:

Documents and Elements

- *Video Screen Captures*
- *Screen captures*
- *Storyboards*
- *Wireframes*
- *Creator statements*
- *Audience experience documentation*

Descriptive and Rights Information

- *Credits*
- *Rights*

Functional, Structural and Technical Details

- *Structural information*
- *Structural maps*
- *System diagrams*
- *Production workflow diagrams*
- *Functional specifications*
- *Technical requirements*
- *Technical specifications*
- *Interaction behaviours*
- *Instructions and guides*

Any additional lists of assets, metadata plus checksums are also important. If the work requires external inputs, such as a dataset or if it is sensor-driven, it would also be advisable to include an example dataset or a bit- stream of the raw sensor data. This may enable the work to be re-presented in the future.” (Langley, S., Carter, T., Davies, M., & Gilmour, I., 2013).

Where some of these criteria are similar to those requested of media artworks in art museum collections, the inclusion of storyboards, wireframes and audience experience documentation are increasingly important to socio-technological acquisitions as well. The ability for organisations to draw a clean line separating acquired objects, supporting materials and archival content is becoming less and less.

Writing of the Planetary acquisition, Cope (2014) wrote

"We open sourced the code but we also released the complete revision history of that code, including all the bug reports, so that people could see both how and why the decisions were made and to understand the trade-offs that created Planetary. As a design museum those trade-offs are paramount to the things we collect. For all the stories of Steve Jobs' perfectionism the history and success of Apple is based on what they've been able to accomplish in the moment and not the magic happy pony world any of its employees wishes were possible . . . We also released as many of the draft sketches and notes as we could get our hands on. In a way we open sourced the curatorial file that all museums keep for their objects. I hope we, and other museums, do more of this. This is where the velocity of an object's history within an institution is encoded and that institution or curator specific understanding of an object, cut across time, is what distinguishes one museum from another."

In the case of Planetary all of this material is made publicly available - the 'curatorial research file' remains a living archive with full public access at . At this stage it is difficult to understand the implications of this degree of transparency for future researchers.

Planetary: Legal

Acquiring Planetary required some alterations to the standard acquisition forms used by the museum. In order to be able to release the source code as part of the interpretative and preservation strategies for the object the museum needed a greater degree of legal certainty than to acquire the object. Releasing the source code, especially under a BSD license, required warranties from Bloom LLC that all underlying code and media assets did not carry forward any IP that might prevent this. As the distinction between fine art and commercial work continues to break down, we expect that this will not be an isolated incident. As we asked our legal counsel at the time, “would Christian Marclay be required to warranty that he had legal authority over all underlying components of his media collage works such as *The Clock*”? Or in the light of photographer Patrick Cariou vs collage artist Richard Prince, would a museum acquiring a work by Prince be required to seek legal clarity before it reproduced it by making the work available online?

These discussions were complicated by Bloom LLC no longer being in operation and the warranties needing to be asserted by the private individuals behind the project who, conceivably, would not receive limited liability protection if unauthorised underlying IP was to be discovered in the future.

Conclusion

Throughout the acquisition process we were mindful of Ben Fino-Radin’s cautionary tale as recounted in his report “Digital Preservation Practices and the Rhizome ArtBase”. Fino-Radin (2011)

writes:

"Without action, obsolescence creates an air of mythology – an inaccessible history. In the case of [Golan Levy's] Floccus, the responsibility of maintenance and care of the work fell upon the artist. Levin expresses frustration that time normally devoted to creating new work is instead spent repairing old projects (G. Levin, personal communication, March 11, 2011). This example is illustrative of the predominant imbalance of responsibility among the stakeholders in the new media community."

The inability or unwillingness of creators to “repair” past work or to ensure its longevity in the face of technological change is also a problem that will only grow in scope in the years to come. Although some artists (such as Lincoln Schatz) are known to be proactive and engaged in the ongoing preservation and maintenance of their work they are likely to remain the minority, at least in the short-term.

We believe that the dynamics described by Fino-Radin will only increase in complexity as more and more of the works that museums collect, regardless of their institutional focus, are born digital. Because digital works exist in an equally digital life-support system, or ecosystem, absent preserving the entire dependency chain for a single digital object museums need to be able to conceptualize and articulate a strategy for demonstrating some kind of tangible proof for those objects in their collection which lack the physicality typically associated with our collections.

These concerns are not only those of art and design museums but all museums and archival institutions charged with preserving our increasingly intangible hyper-networked, mediated present.

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bubble/ <http://www.dezeen.com/2013/12/26/opinion-lucas-verweij-design-bubble/>

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Footnote

1. *In defining 'intangible heritage', UNESCO writes, "cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts." (UNESCO, 2012).*



convergence mirrors

aka, parallel-dopplr

aka, "parallel-dopplr"



Tom Coates <http://plasticbag.org/> and I were trolling each other a couple of weeks ago.

Like a lot of people he was voicing frustration at **the demise and eventual shuttering** <http://magicalnihilism.com/2013/11/04/bye-dopplr/> last year of Dopplr, the social travel website that had been bought and largely neglected for years by Nokia. I made a comment that **privatesquare** <http://straup.github.io/privatesquare/> was growing the ability to add "trips", much the way you could in Dopplr. It's been a slow and gradual process but the core of the functionality has

been working **since late**

January <https://github.com/straup/privatesquare/compare/trips?expand=1> and I've been testing it and dealing with the details ever since.

Tom pointed out that trips without the ability to share them with your friends wasn't very Dopplr-like on the Dopplr Scale.

And he was right. Trips in privatesquare are not a social feature because there's nothing social about privatesquare in the first place. You can't share your check-ins with anyone and there are no plans to add that functionality anytime soon. I'm not opposed to the idea and honestly being able to see someone else's **Atlas of**

Desire nearfuturelaboratory.com/2012/09/04/the-atlas-of-desire/ — a list of places that a person has expressed an opinion about beyond simply "checking in" — would be really useful but that will require an amount of work that a mornings-and-weekends project doesn't afford.

With the trips release you can at least create a shared calendar but that's a pretty limited kind of social and I'll talk about it in detail, later.

●○○○○

7:37



↻

this is privatesquare

≡

Add a new trip

All your trips

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Arriving on

2014-05-16

Departing on

2014-05-16

Arriving by

force of will

▼

Departing by

none of your business

▼

<

>







Tom's comment got me thinking, though, and it started to feel like an extension of what I wrote about **the motivations for building** "oh yeah,

that" <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/03/15/ephemera/#ohyeahthat> . It's not that I don't want to build tools for sharing things with my friends. Rather, it's more that I'd like to build the things that I want to use *first*. I want to make sure that there I are tools I would keep using *even if no one else wanted to play*.

The funny thing about Dopplr was how quickly people started to use it as a device to recall the past as much as they used it as a tool to plan for the future.

There's a lot of chatter these days about applications that are for archiving versus applications that are for doing, or sharing. Or something like that. As usual it still seems to demand comparing **the sad laugh track that Flickr has become** <http://kevbob.tumblr.com/post/83744764365/blinks> against the reality that Instagram doesn't actually *do* very much to start with.

I would like to believe that given the choice between an application that takes as its starting point a stable and robust archive — a thing that is ultimately meant for the individual — and that radiates outward to include social features versus an application that only does social that people will opt for the former.

But not on principle, alone. I think Instagram has proven that.

Portland trip ID 68255093 — tentative

Edit this trip

Portland, Oregon, United States. You are arriving

Your atlas of desire in Portland

I want to go there

Lardo East 1212 SE Hawthorne Blvd Sep '13 La Pigeon 738 E Burnside St Sep '13

again again

Tasty 'N Alder 580 SW 12th Ave Apr '13 Boke Bowl 1028 SE Water Ave Apr '13

Places you've been to in Portland

You've checked in to 33 places in Portland.

Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront — you've been here 5 times

XOXO Festival — you've been here 4 times

Ace Hotel — you've been here 4 times

Gov. Tom McCall Waterfront Park — you've been here 3 times

Kenny & Zuke's Delicatessen — you've been twice

Meat Cheese Bread — you've been twice

Stumptown Coffee Roasters — you've been twice

XOXO Fancy Toilet Trailer — you've been twice

Clyde Common — you've been twice

YU Contemporary Arts Center — you've been twice

And 23 other places

Other visits

You've added 3 other trips to Portland.

You arrived on Sep 19, 2013 and left on Sep 22, 2013.

You arrived on Apr 17, 2013 and left on Apr 20, 2013.

You arrived on Nov 10, 2009 and left on Nov 12, 2009.

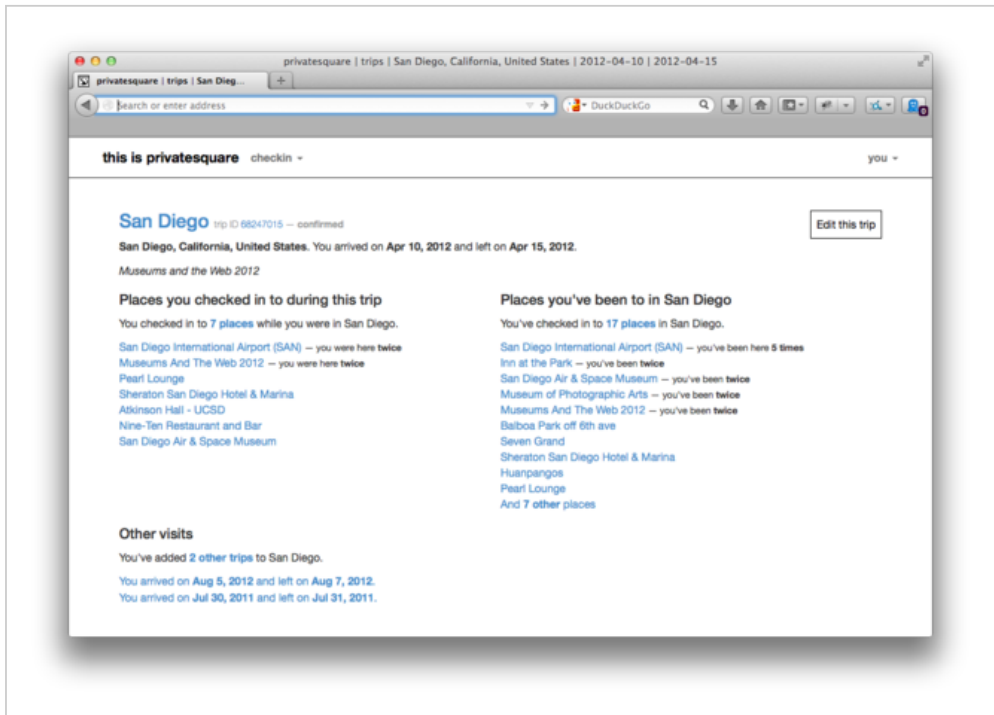
Careful readers will notice that the grammatical tense for the arrival and departure dates, in the screenshot above, is incorrect since the trip is still marked as tentative. It should read "This trip is still tentative but you would be here between..." and has since been

fixed <https://github.com/straup/privatesquare/commit/7bcd251225ed89e06263aff0ef983bbc0ff368> .

That said, I don't believe Instagram or its friends are some kind of universal truth. I just think they are the easy way to build something and if the choice is good and simple versus kind-of-crap and thorough people will usually choose the former. It's not like we have a long history of really good tools for doing any kind of personal archiving, particularly an archive that affords a *measured* sociability, so it's easy to believe that it can't be done.

I am not sure where privatesquare falls on that scale but these are the things I've been thinking about and it's one of the reasons why you can't share trips: I'm still trying to figure out what I want before

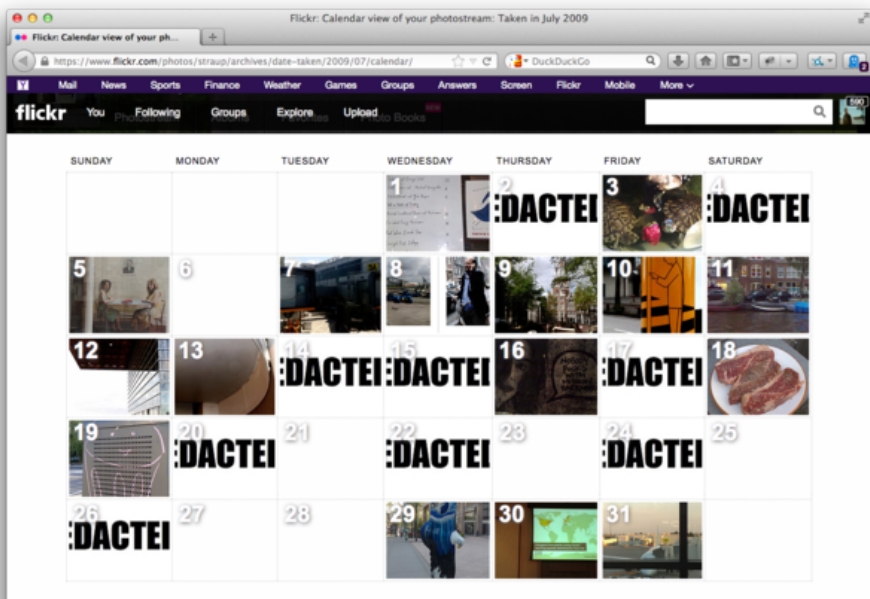
worrying about where other people are going.



So, you can add trips.

You can see all your trips organized by year and by month as well as by city. You can mark trips as being "tentative" or "confirmed" or as "wishful thinking" because that's basically the way most of us live our lives. Individual trips will display the places you checked-in to during your visit as well as all the places you've checked-in to over time. Individual check-ins do not indicate whether they were part of a trip yet.

Pages for trips that are in future will display your "Atlas of Desire" for that city. It used to be possible to flag a venue, in privatesquare, as a place you wanted to visit in by pasting a Foursquare URL in to a form. I eventually removed that because it seemed a bit superfluous but trips will probably bring that functionality back in some form.



You can also **import all your past Dopplr trips** , assuming you exported all of your data before they shut down. That part was awesome and not just because I had to consult Dopplr extensively when applying to Government Club; I genuinely had no memory of why I was

in Canada in July of 2009. Maybe I really am the only person who wants applications that start from the archive radiating outwards but judging by the number of people I know who still use the calendar view on Flickr to situate their past selves I don't think I'm alone.

I have always maintained that the distinction between weblogs and calendars and bookmarking is close to meaningless and used to joke about publishing this weblog as an `.ics` (or shared calendar) file. Exporting your privatesquare check-ins has long been on the list of things to do. Although it's still not possible for check-ins I've now had to write enough of the plumbing to publish *trips* as a shared calendar that I expect it will be pretty easy to export other things as a calendar in future releases.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "privatesquare | trips | calendars". The page title is "this is privatesquare" with a "checkin" link and a "you" dropdown menu. The main heading is "Add a calendar" with a link to "All your calendars". The form includes the following fields and options:

- Name:** A text input field.
- Trips to a particular city:** A text input field with the placeholder "Where are you going?".
- What kinds of trip:** A dropdown menu with "any type of trip" selected.
- Include trip notes:** A checkbox.
- Include past trips:** A checkbox.
- Expire this calendar on:** A date input field.
- Notes:** A large text area.
- Add this calendar:** A button at the bottom left.

For now you can create one or more calendars and share them with people. You can limit calendars to a given city or to a particular type of trip (say only trips marked as "confirmed") or to both. You can also set an expiration date on a shared calendar or include all the trips from the past that match the criteria for a calendar. Calendars can be deleted at any time but the data is a lot like syndication feeds: Once it's been published there's not really any way to scrub all the copies (from people's software caches or their hard drives).

No privatesquare account is required to see a calendar. Instead calendars rely on **casual privacy** <http://www.slideshare.net/kellan/casual-privacy->

ignite-web20-expo style URLs to limit access so the following warning is included on every page containing a casual privacy link. It's quite long as warnings go, perhaps too long. One person who I asked to sanity check the text pointed out that "*I can't tell if I'm supposed to use this option or not*". Which pretty much sums up **doing anything online** <http://www.lawfareblog.com/2014/04/heartbleed-as-metaphor/> these days given all the bad news...

The link below will allow you to share this calendar with other people. It contains all the trips that you've chose for this calendar formatted as an iCal file, which means it can be read and displayed by most calendar applications. This calendar includes the following information:

- *This calendar includes any kind of trip, regardless of its status (pending, confirmed, etc.)*
- *This calendar includes trip notes.*
- *This calendar includes trips from the past.*

Sharing calendars works by using a technique called “casual privacy” which requires creating a secret code long enough as to be effectively unguessable and allows a person who is not logged in to privatesquare as you to see this calendar. That's the ?c=GIBBERISH stuff in the link. It also relies on the link being accessed over an

encrypted connection. That's the https:// stuff in the link.

If you're using a version of privatesquare that does not use encrypted connections then you might want to reconsider using shared calendars (or even privatesquare) at all. Without encryption anyone who happens to be listening on the same network and sees that URL will be able to see the trips associated with a given calendar. It is worth noting that if you're not using a version of privatesquare with encrypted connections then someone might have already seen your secret URL since it is included in the content of this page...

On some levels the same thing applies to sharing that URL, whether or not it is encrypted, via email or some other broadcast mechanism. If someone can see the secret code they can see the trips for that calendar. If all of this sounds a bit paranoid and like a trip to tin-foil hat territory that's because it is. It's mostly a question of degrees and awareness. If you're worried about the modern security state knowing about your trips then you shouldn't be using privatesquare to hide from people in the first place. Also, chances are good that they already know where you're going by a number of other means.

The same is probably true of entities like Google but understand that even if you don't use those services when you send this link to someone with a GMail account you should expect that sooner or later a robot will follow the URL and no one really has any idea what sort of freakish stew these companies are brewing with all the information they collect.

Casual privacy is not a perfect solution. It is meant to be a kind of acceptable middle ground to account for the fact that most calendaring software doesn't have any way to prompt people for login credentials and privatesquare doesn't have any concept of relationships (or permissions) between users. Calendars can be deleted at any time. You can also configure a calendar to stop including updates after a certain dates. In both cases though if someone has already subscribed to a calendar then you should assume they have access to any trips already downloaded. In the end few of us lead lives with the kind of intrigue that warrant anything more than casual privacy but better to understand what's going on than not.

Right?

That's about it, really. Both trips and calendars lack some of the features and polish that I'd like them to have but the basics are all there. I think I imagined this taking four or five scattered week's worth of mornings and weekends and it's been more like four months so barring any outstanding bugs it's time to put privatesquare down for a while and let it simmer and give the other projects some attention.

As always, the source code is over on **GitHub** <https://github.com/straup/privatesquare> and there's a handy tarball of the current release here:

<https://github.com/straup/privatesquare/releases/tag/v2.2> h

<https://github.com/straup/privatesquare/releases/tag/v2.2>

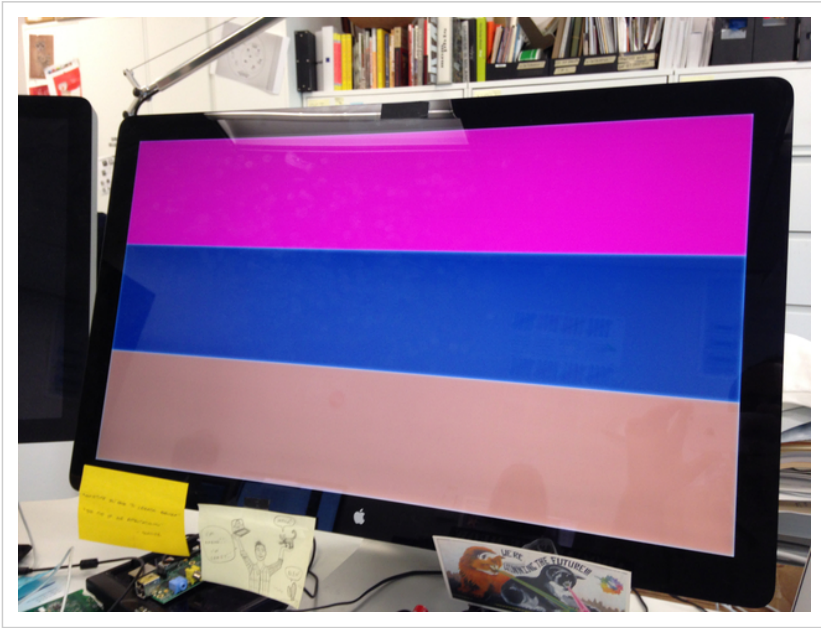
2014-04-21



the internet of non-sequiturs

multiforms
dog-eared

multiforms



I made a thing. I made a thing that most of you can't see outside of photos and screenshots, yet. But I made a thing and I want to remember making it. First, a quick bit of history.

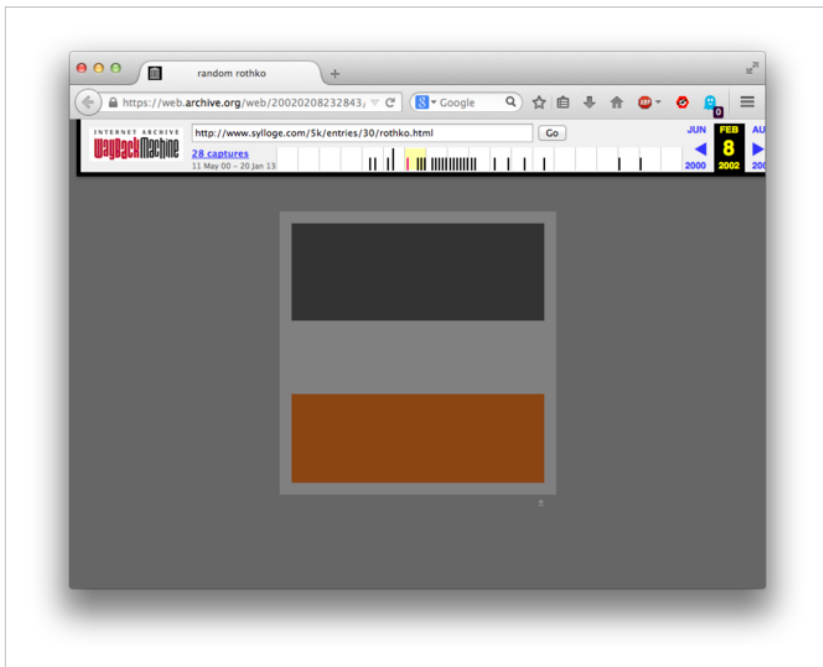
Back in 1999 **Stewart Butterfield** <http://www.twitter.com/stewart/> and friends created **the 5k competition** <http://www.the5k.org/about.php> to celebrate the art and craft of websites weighing in at 5kb or less. To put that in some perspective even **The Mirror Project** <http://www.mirrorproject.com/> which was in its heyday at the time allowed you to upload photos that were a whopping *32kb* in size.

Quoting from the competition's about page:

"The idea behind the contest is that the rigid constraints of designing for the web are what force us to get truly creative. Between servers and bandwidth, clients and users, HTML and the DOM, browsers and platforms, our conscience and our ego, we're left in a very small space to find highly optimal solutions. Since the space we have to explore is so small, we have to look harder, get more creative; and that's what makes it all interesting. Just celebrating that is all."

There's a good article about the project on **A List**

Apart <http://alistapart.com/article/5k> .



One of **my favourite**

entries <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2000/05/05/2068/> was **Heather**

Champ <http://www.hchamp.com/> 's "random rothko" which, along with all the

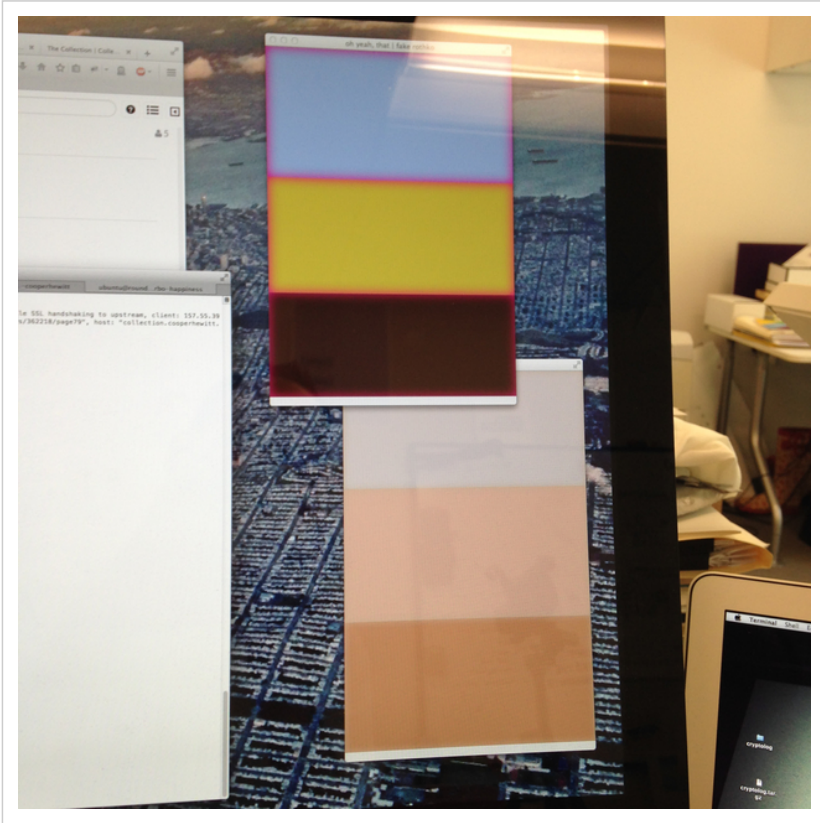
other entries, is still viewable **thanks to the Wayback**

Machine <https://web.archive.org/web/20020208232843/http://www.sylloge.com/5k/entries/30/rothko.html> . All it does is choose three random colours from a fixed list and then generate an equal number of stacked landscape-shaped rectangles so as to look like one of Mark Rothko's so-called

multiforms http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Rothko#Rothko.27s_.22multiforms.22 .

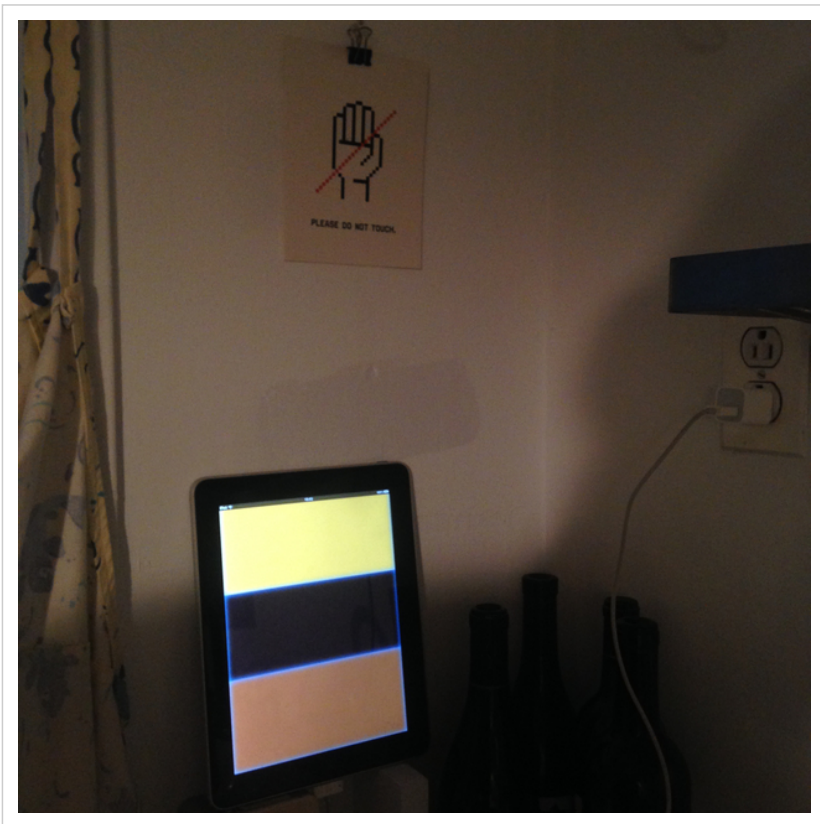
14 years later I decided to do that same thing but using the set of primary colours **derived from uploads to oh yeah,**

that <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/03/15/ephemera/#ohyeahthat> instead of a fixed set of colours. It also uses a fourth colour and the **CSS3 box-shadow** <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/CSS/box-shadow> property to create the illusion of a fuzzy background.



It's just a plain vanilla webpage that can run in fullscreen mode on your phone or your tablet or your desktop. It can also be plugged in to Todd Ditchendorf's **Fluid.app** <http://fluidapp.com/> tool to create a standalone "application" if you use a Mac.

I've made two versions: One that changes as people upload new photos. The other just randomly cycles through all the photos that have ever been uploaded and creates a new multiform every 60 seconds.



That's it. It doesn't do anything else and that's part of the charm for me. It just sits in the background running in **second-screen-mode** <http://russelldavies.typepad.com/planning/2011/06/secondary-attention-part-one-optics.html> stamping out robot-Rothko paintings. Having recently shuttered **Pua** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2011/06/25/meatgrinder/#pua> (at least for the time being) it's nice to have a new screen friend to spend the days the days with.

*Now that I've written this blog post it occurs to me that it would be trivial to build something similar on top of the **Cooper Hewitt Collections API** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/> — since that's ultimately*

where *all this colour stuff* <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/giv-do/> comes
from — so I will probably do that shortly and stick in it the
Play <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/> section.

Update: And then I did. <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/robot-rothko/>

2014-05-03

dog-eared



***tl;dr Offline readers** <https://guardianproject.info/apps/courier/> are on everyone's mind, **these days** <http://amitp.blogspot.com/2014/05/extracting-safaris-reading-list.html> . I made my own. It's a plain vanilla HTML+JS+CSS web application that holds hands with an equally vanilla LAMP+API server. It's probably too soon for anyone else to use but it works. Like it works underground on the subway where the Internet still don't shine.*

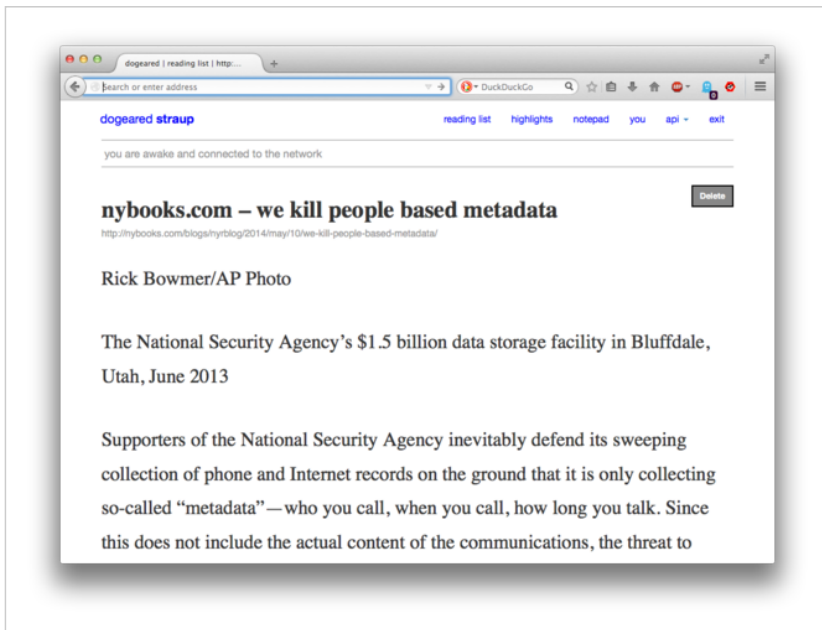
I made a kind of peace with the Kindle when I figured out how to grab a copy of all my highlights and print them out as a "book" at the end of every year. Then we moved to New York almost two years ago and because I have a long commute I do even more reading than I used to and I quickly understood why

Instapaper <http://www.instapaper.com/> , like Foursquare before it, was created in New York City.

Almost everyone here spends somewhere between 30 minutes to 2 hours a day

underground without a network connection and without much to do except hate all of humanity, stare awkwardly their fellow travelers, play Candy Crush (seriously... what the fuck?) or read. To put that in perspective when I had my "dogeared #2013" book printed at the beginning of the year it weighted in at a hefty 736 pages. Most of that was from Instapaper.

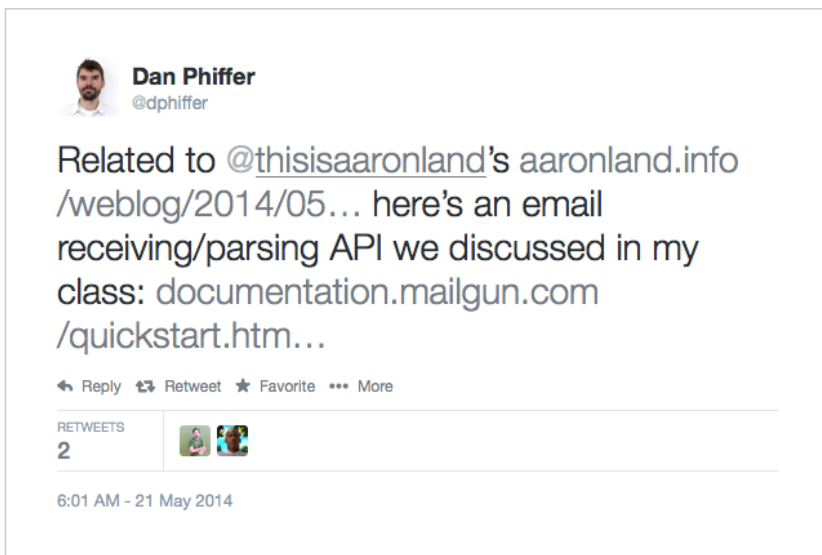
If you ignore, for a moment, the fact that Instapaper just **launched their Highlights feature** <http://blog.instapaper.com/post/85125160146> you might be wondering how I managed to get 700+ pages of highlights *out* of Instapaper. The short answer is: Email.



In what will surely seem like a-non-sequitur-but-trust-me-it-isn't about a month ago **Paul Ford** <http://www.ftrain.com/> and I were invited to sit in on **Dan Phiffer** <http://phiffer.org/> 's Javascript class at CUNY. We were talking about APIs and building applications on top of third-party services and I tried to make the argument that email was the "original" API. Or more specifically it is the one piece of

functionality that comes the closest to being available across all the platforms and all the applications. Almost every app has the basic ability to "send" itself (or whatever it is you are looking at) as an email. Also email has a stupidly easy user interface.

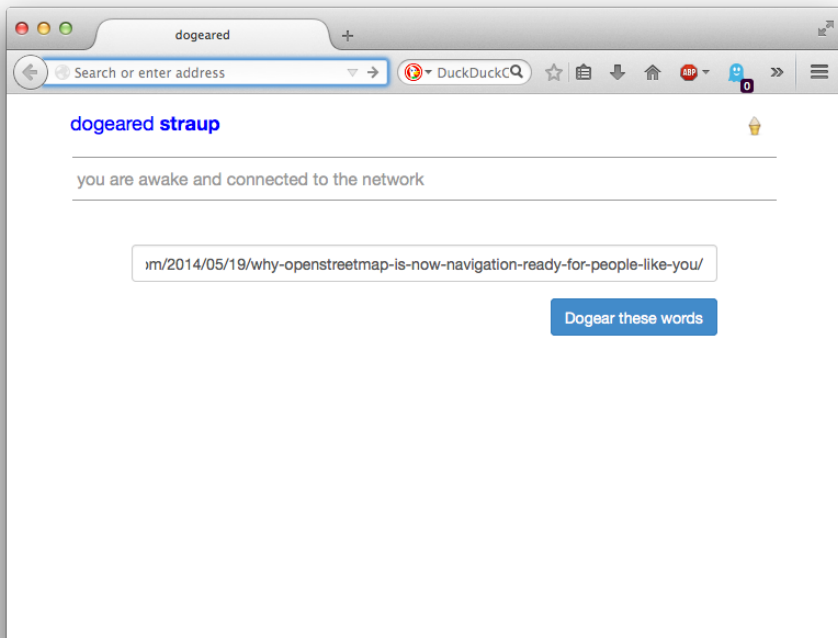
Email is the copy-paste of the Internet. It is passing notes in class. It is writing postcards. It is no less the place of manifestos or the mystery of language and all the **hand-written letters** <https://tinyletter.com/danhon> before it regardless of its delivery medium. It is a conceptual framework that affords more than the alternatives and even where it fails it still demands less than other choices and so it still comes out ahead of everything else. It is hardly perfect but built-in to its use is the idea that the person at the other end of a message isn't a complete idiot and can fill in the blanks, or just hit reply and ask you to elaborate if they can't.



There isn't much to sending or receiving email and that's sort of the point. The next time someone tells you email is "dead" try to imagine the cost of investing in their solution or the cost of giving up all the flexibility that email affords. Whatever the merits of another tool when someone sets up email as a straw man it is worth questioning whether they are just passing off engineering decisions as philosophy.

For all that we enjoy a world of native hardware accelerated applications and their well-designed sexy swooshy-swoosh user-interfaces you are sorry out of luck if you need to make a "mobile app" - even ones as exceptional as Instapaper - do anything it doesn't ship out of the "app store" already doing.

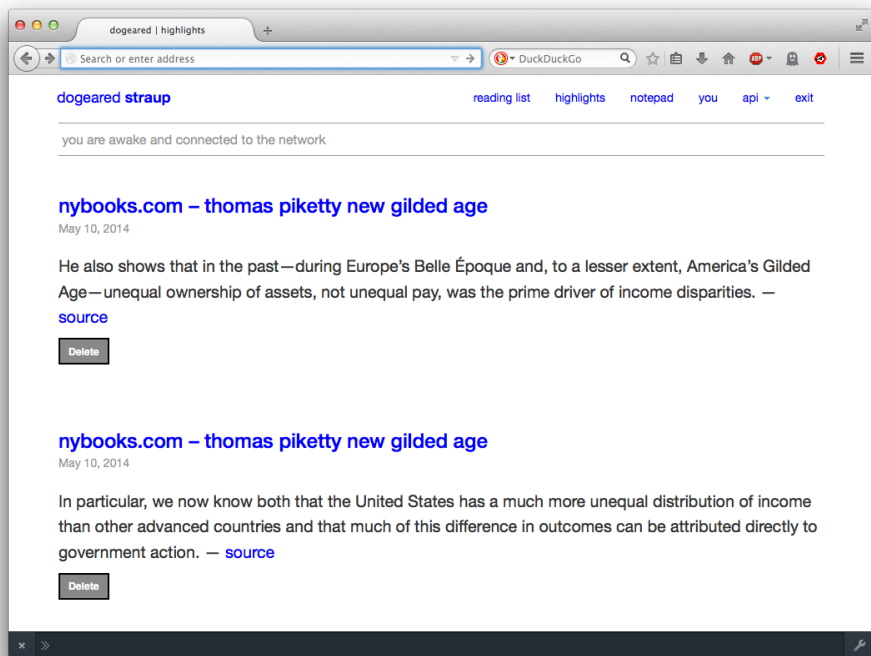
I don't think there's any one party to blame in all of this although the operating system / hardware vendors continue to suffer a deficit of imagination that makes them too afraid to consider any sort of model with users and developers beyond rent-seeking. In this regard Android's "**shared intents**" <http://android-developers.blogspot.com/2012/02/share-with-intents.html> "framework where third-party applications can register themselves as being capable of and interested in handling particular types of events (send to, edit with and so on) should be applauded.



Whether or not all applications register a send-by-email handler when an piece of text is selected is up for grabs but Instapaper does and so I wrote myself **an upload-by-email handler** <https://github.com/straup/pinboard-tools/blob/master/bin/highlight2pinboard.pl> which is like an API by any other name. The upload-by-email handler then turns around and **posts the highlight to Pinboard** <https://pinboard.in/u:straup/t:highlights/> . At the end of every year all those highlights (and bookmarks) are hoovered in to a database on my laptop and **the highlights are extracted** <https://github.com/straup/pinboard-tools/blob/master/solr-cores/pinboard/bin/dump-highlights.py> and formatted as a PDF file which is then sent off to be produced as a printed book.

*Tom Armitage's **pinboard-bookmachine** <https://github.com/infovore/pinboard-bookmachine> is a similar set of tools for generating a book of all your Pinboard links and Alex Foley has written a good blog post <http://newfangled.me/bookmarks-to-books/> detailing how to use it.*

Like the Kindle before it, I was able to make peace with reading everything in Instapaper confident in the assumption that since **the Betaworks acquisition** <http://www.marco.org/2013/04/25/instapaper-next-generation> my every tap and scroll is being analyzed and resold by machines. Whatever you think of that part of your relationship with Betaworks the sheer volume of work they have done since they acquired Instapaper or simply continue to support in order to un-stupid-ify websites and just deliver **the substance of a page rather than the "experience"** <http://www.cbc.ca/thesundayedition/documentaries/2014/05/18/online-news-clickbait-and-the-rise-of-the-list/> usually makes the costs acceptable.



And most important of all I was able to be comfortable with the trade-offs precisely because there was a trade-off: I had a way to get the things I did in Instapaper back out again.

All good. Except for the part where the knowledge, or the sense, that you exist to service other people's algorithms <http://speedbird.wordpress.com/2014/05/17/the-engelbart-overshoot/> or increasingly their National Security Letters is never really anything you get used to.

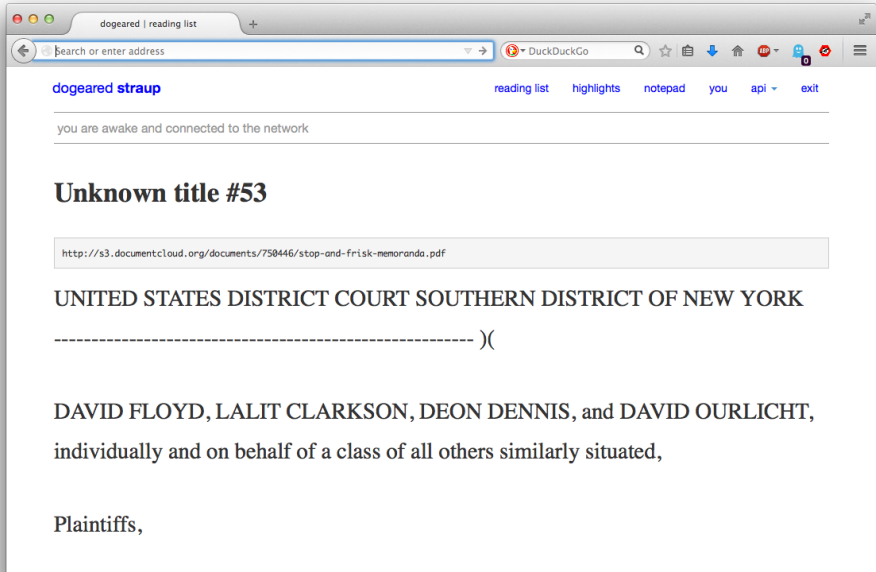
And the part where Instapaper can't parse PDF files. That part *totally sucks*.

This has always been a pet peeve of mine since I started reading a lot on my

phone. On your phone PDF documents are basically the enemy; their pixel perfect layouts requiring an endless parade of pinching and panning and zooming and just generally fucking around in order to actually read anything. Which is madness since it's a PostScript document and the raw text is in there somewhere just waiting to be displayed in any number of ways.

This was brought home to me in August 2013 after a Federal District Court wrote an opinion on the legality of the New York's **stop-and-frisk** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City_stop-and-frisk_program laws. **The decision was published as a 198-page PDF file** <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/750446/stop-and-frisk-memoranda.pdf> . That's 198 pages of debate about motive and individual freedoms and how communities judge and police themselves that I would absolutely read. If only it weren't a PDF file. Ever since then I have been trying to shame the **NYPL Labs** <http://labs.nypl.org/> in to running a PDF-to-text service for precisely these kinds of documents. Wouldn't that be an awesome public service?

So about six months ago I wrote a little Java daemon called **dogeared-extruder** <https://github.com/straup/dogeared-extruder> . Basically all it is is a little bit of scaffolding around three "content extraction" libraries. They are **boilerpipe** <https://code.google.com/p/boilerpipe/> and **java-readability** <https://github.com/basis-technology-corp/Java-readability> which both aim to implement **Arc90's "Readability"** <http://lab.arc90.com/2009/03/02/readability/> functionality and **Tika** <https://tika.apache.org/> which is a general purpose some-file-to-metadata-and-content tool. Tika can handle image files or word documents and URLs and *insert happy-dance here* PDF files.



dogeared-extruder <https://github.com/straup/dogeared-extruder>

does not do very much, by design. It accepts a URL or a file and tries to parse and it returns the data as moderately formatted HTML or a blob of JSON containing things that look like paragraphs. dogeared-extruder, or more specifically the tools it invokes, does not do anywhere near as good a job of extracting text or cleaning up webpages as either Readability or Instapaper.

From the very beginning the idea was always to build a separate website that could do some of the things that Instapaper does (mostly just keeping a list of things you want to read) and using dogeared-extruder as a service, passing in URLs and getting back blobs of text for doing stuff with. That way there would be a nice clear separation of concerns between things. The text extraction piece could be worked in isolation from all the interaction and related considerations for doing stuff with that text, as you'll see below.

*Update: For example, last night I discovered Thomas Levine's **How I parse PDF files** <http://thomaslevine.com/!/parsing-pdfs/> which looks to use Inkscape to do most of the heavy-lifting.*

In the process I started thinking that if the user-facing part of the website was just receiving and storing bags of paragraphs would it be possible to also store that data on a client using a web browser's **local storage** <http://www.w3.org/TR/webstorage/> functionality? Not in the abstract but as a living breathing application that I would actually use on the subway in New York City going to and from work. An offline reader, but built as a web application.

The answer, it seems, is a tentative "yes". It consists of a standard web server and database and API setup and a whole lot of JavaScript to deal with fetching and caching documents and trying to do the right thing when the network goes offline.



In addition to using the browser's local storage database the code relies heavily on the still nascent **application cache** <http://www.w3.org/TR/offline-webapps/> (sometimes just called "appcache") feature-set to work. Quite a lot has been written about how appcache is weird and fussy and often broken most notably Jake Archibald's **Application Cache is a Douchebag** <http://alistapart.com/article/application-cache-is-a-douchebag> .

Most of what was written back then still applies but things feel like they are

getting a little better. Mike Radcliffe's **Application Cache is no longer a Douchebag** <http://flailingmonkey.com/application-cache-not-a-douchebag> was very helpful for getting a grasp on the current state of affairs. That said, appcache still relies on and remains hyper conservative about the way it interprets the **manifest file** https://github.com/straup/dogeared-www/blob/master/www/templates/page_appcache_manifest.txt listing all the bits of the application it needs to cache locally.

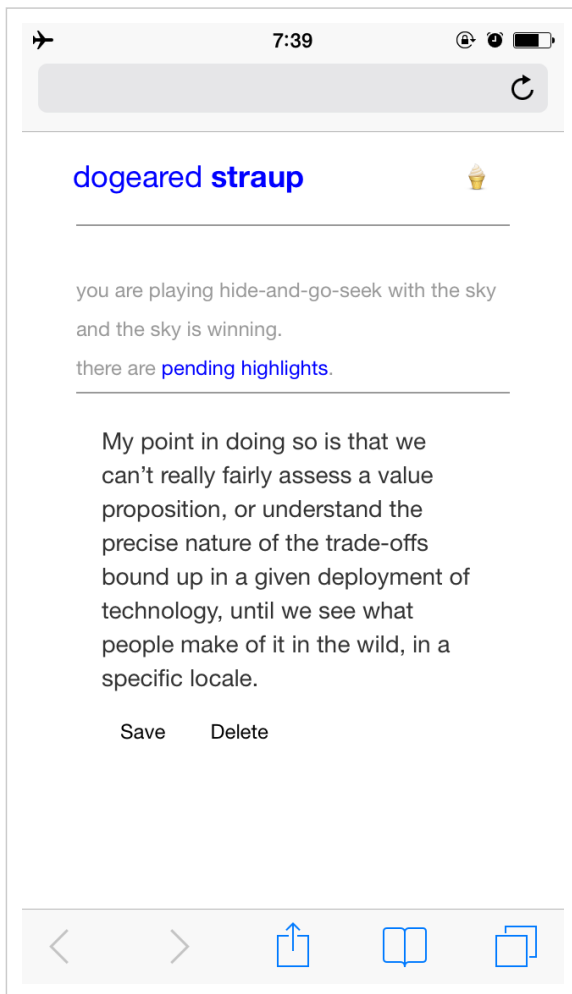
If you can change the contents of any file - and that might include the list of documents in your reading - you need to somehow update the contents manifest in order for the browser to reflect those changes. For example:

- *Every time you change one of the JavaScript or CSS files. This is handled by a combination of the **make build** <https://github.com/straup/dogeared-www/blob/master/Makefile> command and the **increment-manifest.sh** <https://github.com/straup/dogeared-www/blob/master/bin/increment-manifest.sh> script that updates the manifest's "version" number.*
- *~~Every time a new document or highlight is added. This is handled by updating the manifest which is generated programmatically by inserting a timestamp of the user's most recent activity. Maybe? Sorta? See notes below about the one-page Javascript applications...~~*
- *Every time one the site's time-sensitive OAuth2 tokens (bound to the currently logged-in user) rotates. We deal with this by hash the token details in to a unique-but-reproducible-during-the-tokens-lifetime piece of gibberish.*

All of which made me change the document loading code so that documents are always retrieved from the local cache and (if possible) after an initial API call to refresh list of documents to be read. This is not ideal and means I've written one of

those dreaded one-page JavaScript apps that always load with an empty page before getting around to displaying any content. It's possible that the only thing you should send server-side for a thing that uses appcache is the shell, leaving the *entirety* of your logic in JavaScript.

I am not happy about this but given the fussiness around how a user's reading list gets cached when that data is written to the page server-side it seems like an acceptable poison. For now.



And it's not like any of this is implemented (or broken) in any seemingly consistent way across different browsers. The lack of any sort of verbose `console.log` style debugging to introspect what the browser is doing and thinking makes developing application cache based applications pretty frustrating but we can always hope those tools will start to appear over time.

Update: Jake

Archibald <https://twitter.com/jaffathecake/status/468664541149425664>

*wrote to mention **the first draft of the Services Worker***

spec <http://jakearchibald.com/2014/service-worker-first-draft/> *which looks interesting. At a glance it seems sacrifice the ease of maintaining a declarative manifest file for a whole lot of JavaScript callbacks and abstractions in order to be able to do better debugging (or advanced tom-lery) which makes me think that most of the issues in the Application Cache spec could just be fixed with better introspection. The problem, fundamentally, is that there's no window on what the browser thinks is going on and I'm not sure how Service Workers improve that.*

It's super early days and not anywhere near as elegant in its user interface or user interactions as Instapaper is but it works. It works in that way a proof-of-concept works. It works until it doesn't. It works technically but it lacks the attention to detail that makes its working-ness transparent. It works in that way that there is something tangible to make transparent now.

- *It doesn't have swooshy-swoosh touch events for moving between documents.*
- *Highlighting is only just sort of becoming a native element in JavaScript and it's certainly not configured to easily trigger actions so all the "save this selection" is home-grown and full of bugs.*
- *The highlight button itself is inserted directly after the text, rather than hovering over the text, so you can easily end up with annoying text reflow issues. This is especially true when you are trying to highlight a passage at the end of a paragraph because the highlight button gets in the way and*

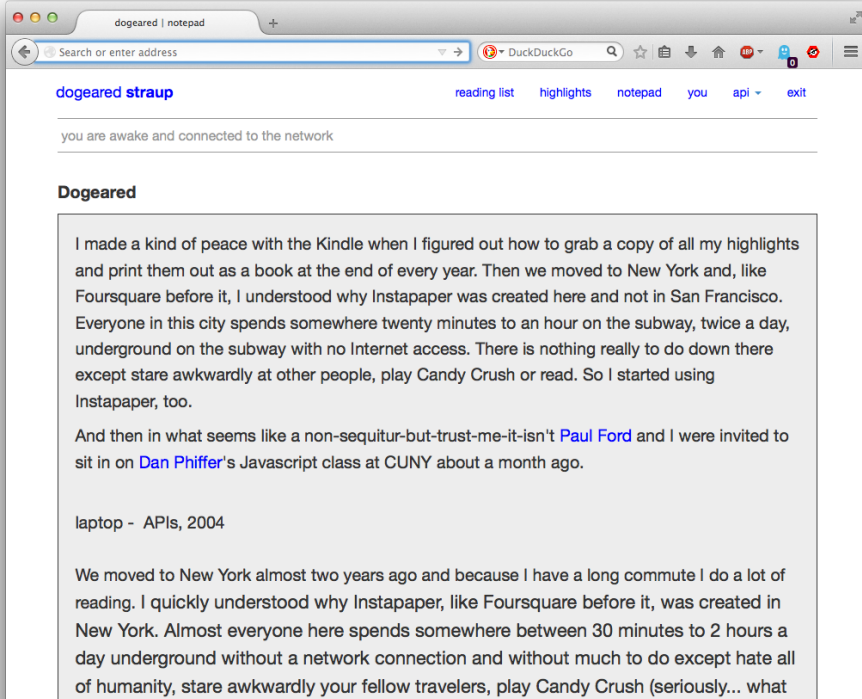
then the operating system tries to helpfully select the entire paragraph for you.

- *Selecting an entire paragraph in WebKit cause the current selection in JavaScript to be flushed because ... computers?*
- *None of the buttons are particularly well-suited for lazy thumbs on mobile phones yet.*
- *It doesn't remember where you left off in a text so there's a lot of scrolling involved in using the app.*
- *It doesn't send highlights to Pinboard and you can't easily share articles or highlights with people. It doesn't even send email yet.*
- *There is no simple one-button export although there is an API that the site itself uses if you're so inclined to built an export tool yourself.*
- *Because you track text selection in Mozilla using `onmouseup` rather than `selectionchange` events it's easy to forget to ignore things that aren't the "highlight" button.*
- *The relationship between `dogeared.documents.js` and `dogeared.document.js` and all the `dogeared.cache.*.js` libraries needs to be reconsidered and possibly refactored.*
- *Even though "extruder" service allows you to upload local files to be parsed that functionality is not yet parse of the website.*
- *Nothing is encrypted so you are the mercy of your browser's security policy (if any) around the local storage database. There's probably some lessons to be gleaned from Aaron Boodman's **Halfnote** <https://code.google.com/p/halfnote/> project (circa 2006) to create an offline and encrypted notepad.*

- *Oh, and you need to set it up yourself and that includes running the extractor as a standalone Java daemon* <https://soundcloud.com/eyebeamnyc/one-on-one-conversations-ingrid-burrington-and-james-bridle> .

It doesn't so search yet, either. Unless someone else wants to do it themselves, **search is at least a few months away** <https://github.com/straup/dogearied-www/> . It will probably Solr, maybe ElasticSearch. The medium-term goal - like before search is complete - is to figure out which pieces can be run on top of existing "application" servers like Heroku (dogearied-www should be easy enough now that **ApacheScript** <https://devcenter.heroku.com/articles/getting-started-with-php> is supported as a first-class application environment) and to "container-ize" all the rest using something like Docker or any of the other push-button-unix-server-as-a-standalone-application tools.

But it works. You can read documents synced across devices and the application (mostly) degrades and recovers gracefully with the availability of network access. And it works equally well in the browser on my laptop as it does on my phone.

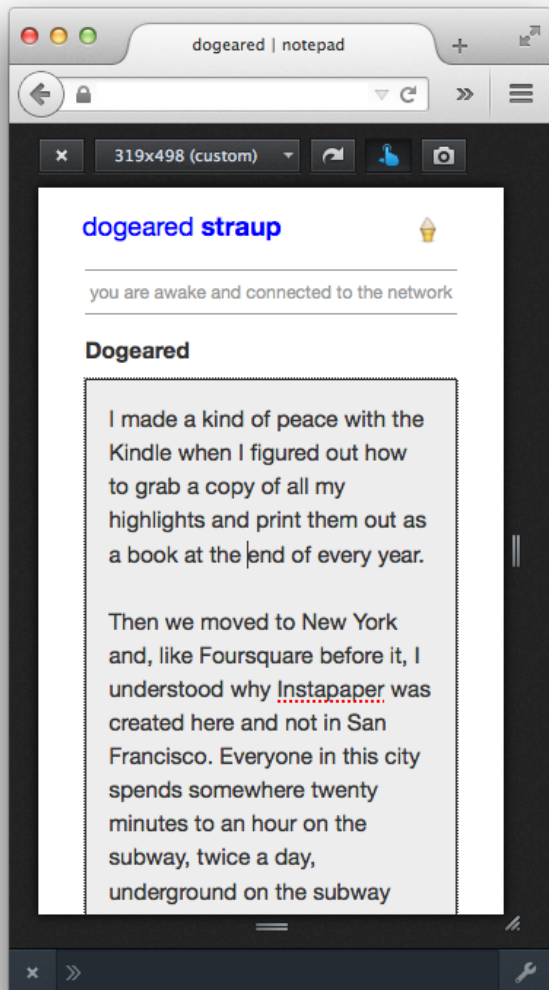


Somewhere along the way I ended up adding "notepad" functionality to the website. This feels like a bit of a side-car and may eventually be moved in to a separate application but it turns out I also do a fair amount of writing on my phone while I am underground so it seemed like a good use-case for further testing the same techniques used to build an offline reader. Most of the first draft for this blog post was written using the notepad feature while on the subway.

Did I mention I ride the subway a lot? I am starting to think of the subway as cross-training for the grim meat hook world where the internet we all knew and loved has been taken away from us.

There's nothing particularly magic about it. Like nothing. It uses the same

"local storage" hooks to keep notes on the device and simply inserts the body of the text in to a <div> element with the `contenteditable` attribute set to "on". Text is saved locally every 30 seconds and periodically synced to a central server (this includes fetching any new notes that may have been written elsewhere) via the API for only the barest approximation of **what we think counts as synchronization in 2014** <http://inessential.com/vespersyncdiary> . It's basically just first-past-the-post with the most recent revision overwriting older ones. There is no attempt to merge documents and there is no history of changes so you can be sure that sooner or later hilarity (or disaster or both) will ensue and I will have to get around to fixing that.

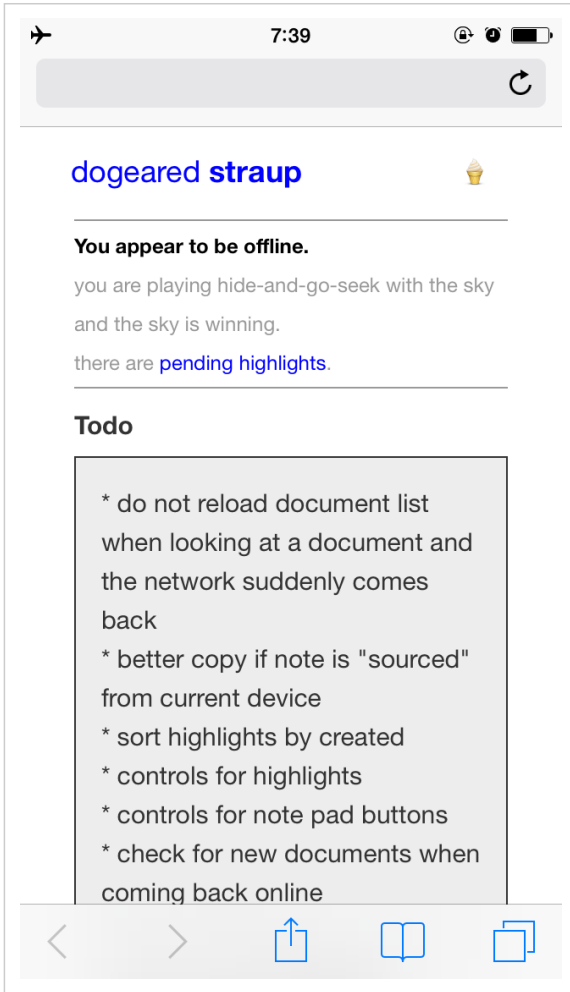


Such is the way of mornings-and-weekends projects.

I used to use Dropbox and a nifty iphone app called Elements to do this. But then Elements stopped working and Dropbox just started to seem less interesting **for**

all the usual reasons <http://www.drop-dropbox.com/> and trying to write on a laptop on the subway is generally not advised and often simply impossible given the crowds.

In the meantime I have an offline reader that can sync across devices and handle PDF files and save highlights. It also has the world's simplest and dumbest and functional notepad for ... well, notes. All in a web browser. Eventually it will be searchable and in until then it has an API that I can use to build bespoke features. I doubt that I will stop using Instapaper any time soon but now I have something to compare it to. I have a thing that not only works but is hopefully built in such a way that I can work on the details in small and manageable chunks as they become important and time permits.



The source code is available for people who want to take a look. This is alpha (pre-alpha?) quality software and there is nothing that looks like proper documentation yet. I am not sure that it won't be more annoying than not for anyone other than me at this point but you can decide that for yourself.

<https://github.com/straup/dogeared->

[www/ https://github.com/straup/dogeared-www/](https://github.com/straup/dogeared-www/)

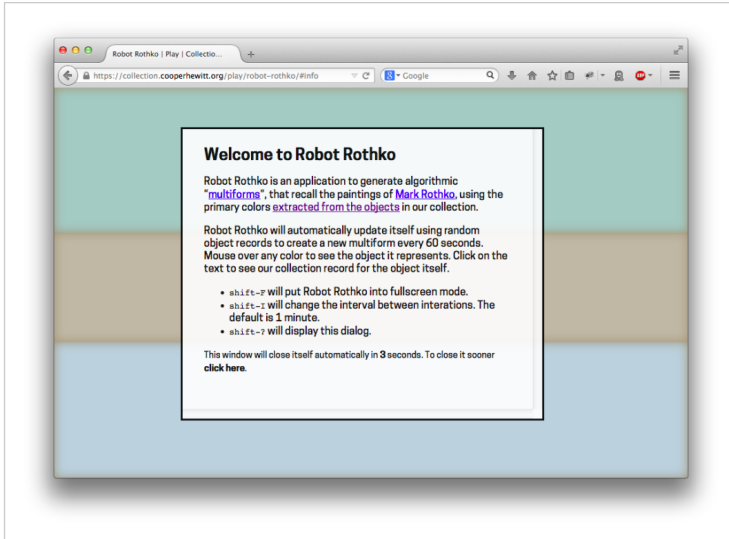
2014-05-12



Things I have written elsewhere #1404705600

Robot Rothko

Robot Rothko



*This is a blog post I originally wrote for the **Cooper Hewitt Labs***

weblog <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/robot-rothko/> , on July 07 2014.

Now that I've written this blog post it occurs to me that it would be trivial to build something similar on top of the **Cooper Hewitt Collections**

API <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/> — since that's ultimately where **all this colour stuff** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/giv-do/> comes from — so I will probably do that shortly and stick in it the

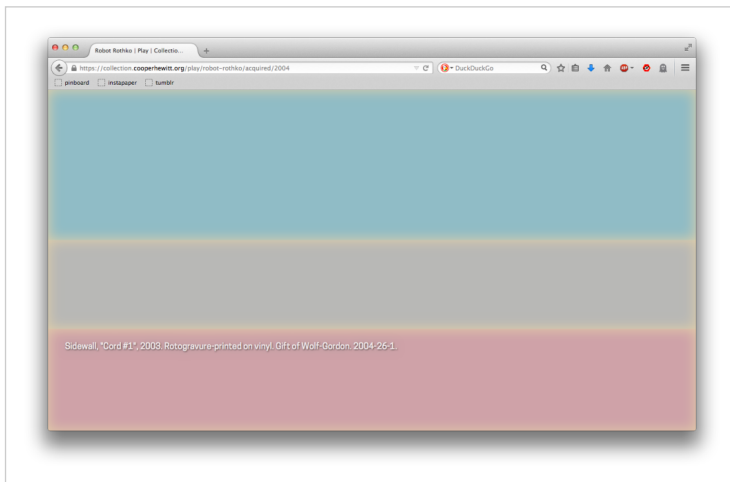
Play <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/> section.

That's **something I wrote last**

week <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/05/12/non/#multiforms> on my personal weblog. I was writing about a little web “application” that I'd made to generate algorithmic “**multiforms**” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Rothko#Rothko.27s_.22multiforms.22 ” that recall the work of the late painter **Mark Rothko** <http://www.markrothko.org/> . The source of the colors used to create these robot-multiforms are derived from photo uploads and extracted using the same code that the Cooper Hewitt uses to generate color palettes for the objects in our collection. **We wrote about that process last**

year. <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/giv-do/>

These robot “paintings” are built by fetching three photos and using their primary color to fill one of three stacked rectangles that make up the canvas. A dominant color for a fourth photo is used along with an **inset CSS3 box-shadow** <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/CSS/box-shadow> to give the illusion a fuzzy, hazy background on which the rectangles sit. Every 60 seconds a new version is generated and the colors (and boxes) gently transition from old to new.



In that original blog post, I also wrote:

That's it. It doesn't do anything else and that's part of the charm for me. It just sits in the background running in **second-screen-mode** <http://russelldavies.typepad.com/planning/2011/06/secondary-attention-part-one-optics.html> stamping out robot-Rothko paintings. ... It's nice to have a **new screen friend** <http://booktwo.org/notebook/thamestide/> to spend the days the days with

They're not really Rothko paintings, obviously, and to suggest that they are would do the painter a disservice. Rothko's paintings are not just any random set of colors stacked on top of one

another. Rothko worked long and hard to choose the arrangement of his paintings and it's easy to imagine that he would have been horrified by some of the combinations that Robot Rothko offers up. But like the **experimental Albers Boxes** **feature** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/albers-boxes/> they are a nod and gesture – and a wink – towards the real thing.



Having gotten things working for a personal non-museum and not-really-for-strangers project I decided that it would be nice to do something similar for for the museum *which is absolutely for everyone*. So, today we are launching **Robot**

Rothko <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/#info> which is exactly the same as the application described above except that it uses **objects from our**

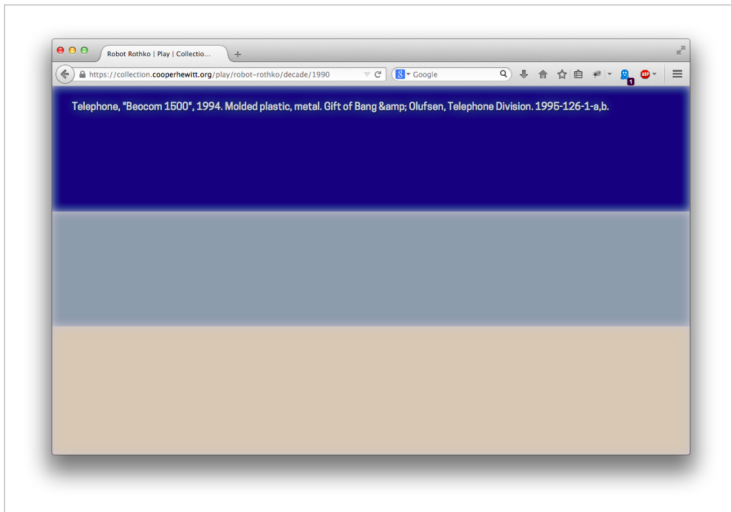
collection <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/> instead of photos as its source material. Like this:

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/#info>

See the **#info** part of that URL? That will cause the application to load with an information box that explaining what you're looking at (and that will close itself automatically after 30 seconds). If you just want to jump straight to the application all you have to do is remove the **#info** from the URL.

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/> **<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/#info>**

Robot Rothko will automatically update itself using random object records to create a new multiform every 60 seconds. Mouse over any color to see the object it represents. Click on the text to see our collection record for the object itself.



You can also filter stuff by person, decade. You can also filter by the year we acquired an object if you can guess where it is; that one still feels a little buggy so we're going to hold off publishing the URL until we can figure out what's wrong. Here are some examples of the first

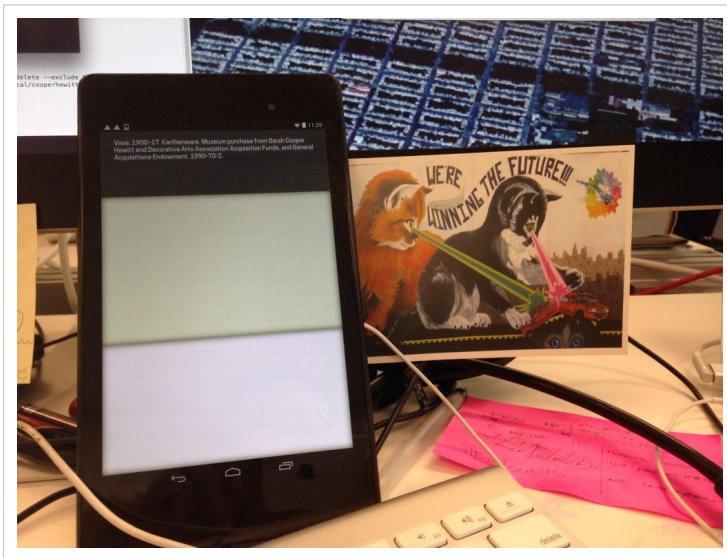
two:

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/people/18046041> <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/people/18046041>

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/decade/1910> <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/decade/1910>

Robot Rothko is **native to the**

web <https://archive.org/details/NativeToAWebOfData> which means it will work in any modern web browser whether it's on your desktop or your phone or your tablet. It can be put it to fullscreen mode (by pressing shift-F) and if you save the website's URL to your homescreen on your phone, or tablet, it is configured to launch without any of the usual browser chrome. If you use a Mac you can plug the URL for Robot Rothko in to Todd Ditchendorf's handy **Fluid.app** <http://fluidapp.com/> which will turn it all in to a shiny desktop application. *I am guessing there are equivalent tools for Windows or Linux but I don't know what they are.*



If you'd like to generate your own **Robot**

Rothkos <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko/> there's an API method for doing just that:

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.play.robotRothko> [http s://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.play.robotRothko](https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.play.robotRothko)

And of course it works with our recently announced support for

DSON <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/formats/dson/> as a response format:

```
curl -X GET
'https://api.collection.cooperhewitt.org/rest/?
method=cooperhewitt.play.robotRothko&access_token=SEEKRET&pers
```

such "rothko" is such "canvas" is so "49" and "28" and "23" many and "palette" is so such "colour" is "#b8ab5b" , "id" is "18805769" , "epitaph" is "Folding Fan, 1900\u20131905. Medium: silk, wood, horn, metal, metal spangles. Gift of Lillian C. Hart. 1985-89-1." wow ? such "colour" is "#c7c7c7" . "id" is "18640557" ! "epitaph" is "Drawing, "Two Studies for Rectangul", ca. 1965. Pen and black ink on white wove paper. Gift of Vladimir Kagan. 1992-56-7." wow , such "colour" is "#db8952" , "id" is "18133219" , "epitaph" is "Fragment, mid-18th century. Medium: silk\nTechnique: plain weave patterned by supplementary warp floats and complementary weft floats. Gift of John Pierpont Morgan. 1902-1-811." wow many ? "background" is such "colour" is "#c7a9af" . "id" is "18761047" ! "epitaph" is "Booklet Cover Sheet, 1916. Color woodcut on lavender wove paper paper. Museum purchase from Drawings and Prints Council Fund and through gift of Margery and Edgar Masinter and Merrill C. Berman. 1999-50-1-3." wow wow , "filters" is so many and "stat" is "ok" **wow**

Robot Rothko lives in a new section of the collections website called

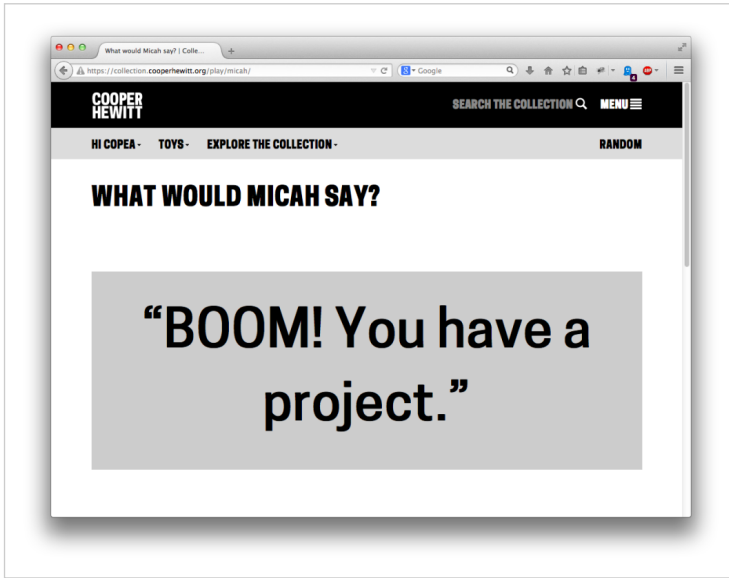
“Play <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play> “. The distinction between the Play section and the **Experimental**

Features <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/experimental/> section of the website can probably be easiest thought of as: Experimental features are things that apply to the entirety of the collections website, while Play things are small contained applications that use the **collections**

API <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api> and focus on or build off a particular aspect

of the collection. The first of these was Sam Brenner's

SkyDesigner <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/announcing-skydesigner-sam-brenner-joins-the-labs/> and Robot Rothko is actually the third such application.

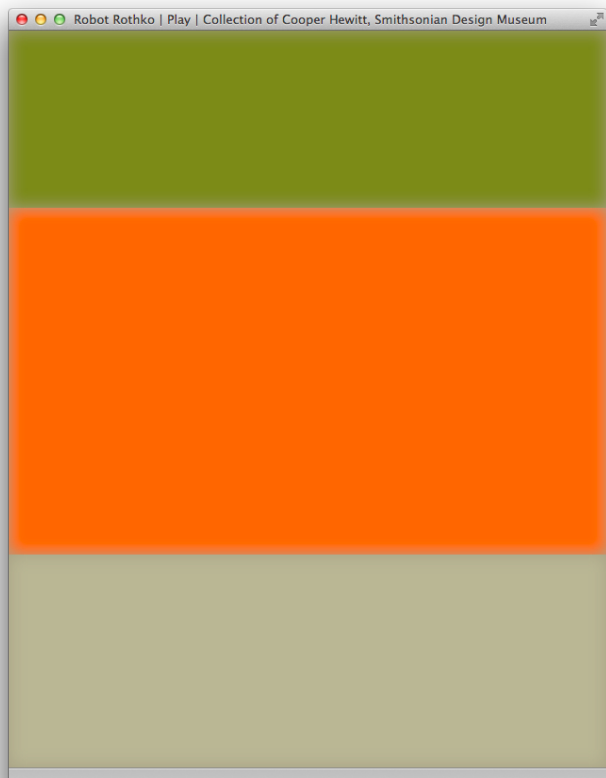


In between those two was **What Would Micah Say?**

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/micah/> (WWMS) a quick end-of-day project to test out the **W3C's Text-to-Speech APIs** <http://www.w3.org/community/speech-api/> that are starting to appear in some web browsers (read: Chrome and Safari as of this writing, and make sure you have the volume turned up). The WWMS “application” was mostly a simple 20-minute exercise to test whether fetching some content dynamically and feeding to the text-to-speech APIs actually works and produces something useable. It does, which is very exciting because it opens up any number of accessibility-related improvements we can start thinking about adding to the collections website.

That we happened to use the **cooperhewitt.labs.whatWouldMicahSay API**

method <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.labs.whatWouldMicahSay> and then configured the text-to-speech API to read his words as if spoken by a “French” robot made it all a little bit silly and a little more fun but those are important considerations. Because sometimes playing at – or making interesting – a technical problem is the best way to work through whether it is even worth pursuing in the first place.



2014-07-07



Things I did not mention at the time

The Mile High Museum
Singapore

The Mile High Museum

For a while now I have been venturing the opinion that we should simply **move all the museums out to the airport** <https://pinboard.in/u:straup/t:airports/t:museum> . The argument is centered around the idea that the kinds of infrastructures we need to store and transport and rotate our collections, in the service of a meaningful public access, might best be found in the contemporary airport or more specifically the so-called **Aerotropolis** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2011/04/02/status/#airportcity> .



If not *all* the museums then at least the **Smithsonian** <http://si.edu/> . We have so much stuff in our collection that we wouldn't even need to remove anything already on display on **The**

Mall <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2013/07/25/verb/#quantified> in Washington. We could simply get things out of storage and fill every large and mid-sized airport in the United States which would be an interesting way for the organization to fulfill its mandate as a national institution.

If nothing else airports have semi-decent seating which would be an improvement over most museums.

SFO alone **has 17 exhibition spaces** <http://www.flysfo.com/museum/exhibitions/map> , all part of a museum operated by the airport's parent company. The recently opened Terminal 2 at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport **houses a collection of 7,000 artworks.** <http://artradarjournal.com/2014/01/10/indias-largest-public-art-project-opens-in-mumbai-airport/> This list goes on.



Which makes these photos, taken at the airport in Hong Kong, so great. Although they are just a catalog of items whose trade is prohibited or which are deemed too dangerous for plane travel — *I am not sure why those watches are classified as "dangerous weapons" but maybe I am just not trying hard enough* — when you stop to consider the history and bent of places like New York City's

Mmuseum <http://www.mmuseumm.com/> or the **V&A's Rapid**

Response <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/jul/02/victoria-and-albert-rapid-response-gallery-unveiled> project or you know... **the**

Smithsonian <http://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/difficult-bequest-history-smithsonian-2> there isn't much to suggest that

you aren't in fact looking at a pair of display cases in a museum.

2014-07-18

Singapore

I had occasion to visit Singapore, recently. This is some of what happened.

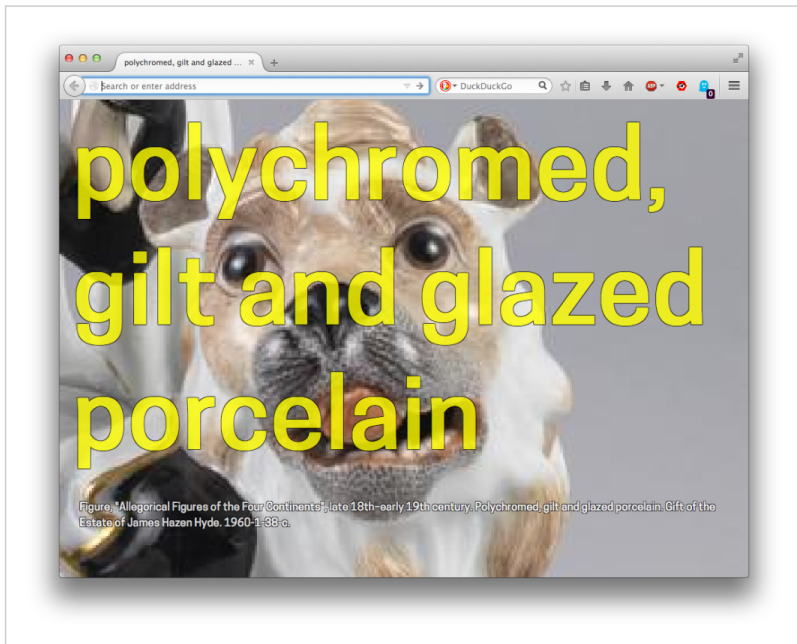
- *HKG / a full moon setting in to a bed of fluffy morning clouds*
- *DON'T WORRY EVERYONE / THE CHANEL STORE AT HKG OPENS PROMPTLY AT 7AM*
- *And then I read Piketty in Business Class.*
- *What is a museum's rate of "time preference" ?*
- *The beautiful **Rorschmaps** <http://rorschmap.com/> made by the exterior video camera and the runway and the plane's reflective underbelly.*
- *Museums of the future will exist **to furnish the convergent spaces** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/07/18/at-the-time/#mile-high> of airports and hospitals.*
- *Why has no one Auto-Tunes-ed all the audio guides yet ?*
- *selfie-sticks mounted on razor-skooters / just saying*



Things I have written elsewhere
#1407124800

The Medium is the Message (and pubsocketd)

**The Medium is the Message (and
pubsocketd)**



*This was a blog post **originally written for the Cooper Hewitt Labs weblog** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/the-medium-is-the-message-and-pubsocketd/> and published in August, 2014.*

Have you ever wanted to see a real-time view of all the objects that people are looking at on **the collections website** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/> ? Now you can!

At least for objects with images. There are lots of opportunities to think about interesting ways to display objects without images but since everything that follows has been a weekends-and-mornings project we've opted to start with the "simple" thing first.

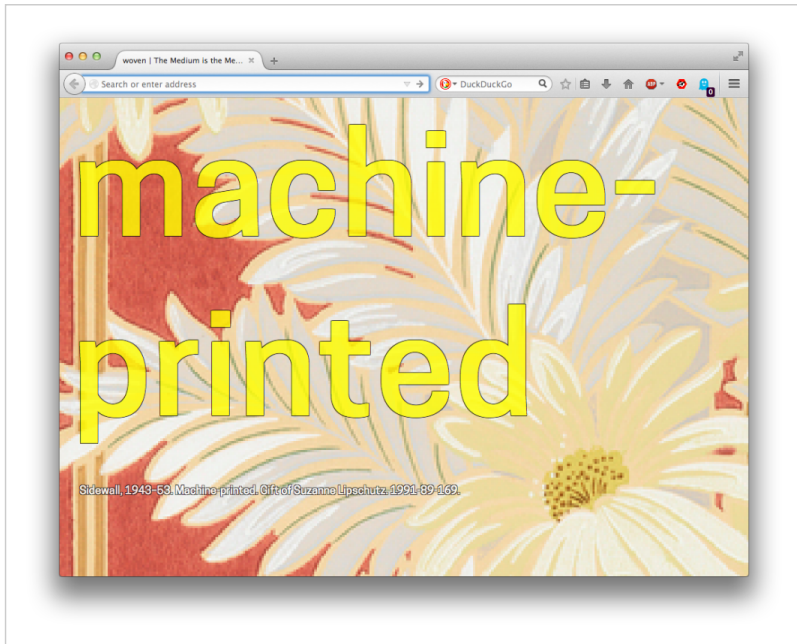
We have lots of different ways of describing media: **12, 865 ways** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/media> at last count to be precise. The medium with the most objects (2, 963) associated with it is

cotton <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/media/35402927/> but all of these numbers are essentially misleading. The history of the cataloging of the collection has preferred precision and detail over the kind of rough bucketing (for example, tags) that lots of people are used to these days.

It's a practice that can sometimes seem frustrating in the moment but, in the long-run, we're better served for it. In time we will get around to assigning high-level categorizations for equally high-level browsing but it's worth remembering that the practice of describing objects in minute detail predates things like databases, which we take for granted today. In fact these classifications, and their associated conventions and rituals, were the de-facto databases before computers or databases had even been invented.

But 13,000 different media, most of which only describe a single object, can be overwhelming. Where do you start? How do you know what to look for? Given the breadth of our collection what *don't* we have? And given the level of detail we try to assign to objects how do you whether a search doesn't yield any results because it's not in our collection or simply because we're using a different name for the same thing you're looking for?

This is a genuinely Big and Hairy Problem and we have not solved it yet. But the ability to relay objects as they are viewed by the public, in real-time, offers an interesting opportunity: *What if we just displayed (and where possible, read aloud) the medium for that object?*



That's all **The Medium is the**

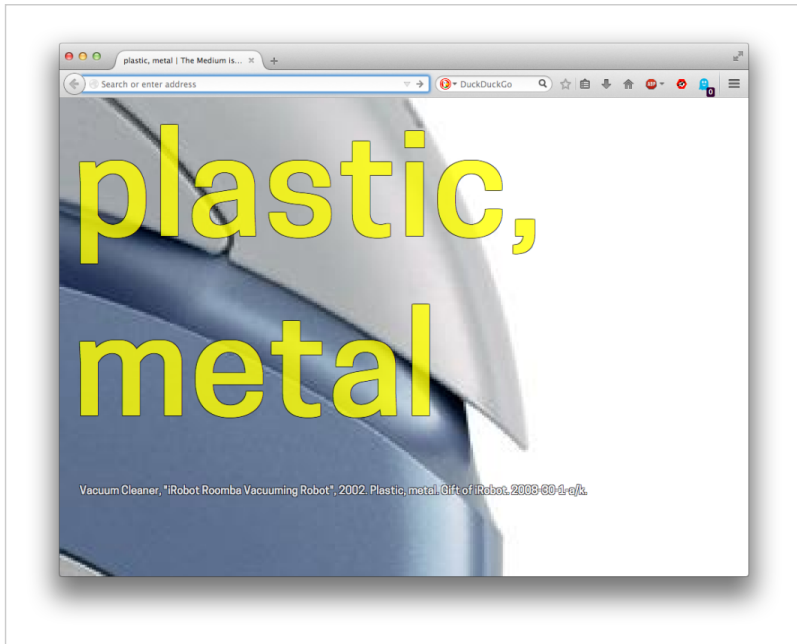
Message <http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org/#info> does: It is an ambient display that let you keep an eye on the kinds of things that are in our collection and offered a gentle, polite way to start to see the shape of all the different things that tell the story of the museum. It's not a tool to help you take a quiz so much as a way to absorb an awareness of the collection as if by osmosis. To show people an *aspect* of the collection as an avenue to begin understanding its entirety.

We're not thinking enough about sound. If we want all these things to communicate with us, and we don't want to be starting at screens and they're going to do more than flash a couple of lights, then we need to work with sound. Either 'sound effects' that mean something or devices that talk to us. Personally, I think it'll be the latter morphing into the former. And this is worth thinking about because it's already creeping up on us. Self-serve checkouts are talking at us, reversing trucks are beeping at us, trucks turning left are barking at us, incoherently – all with much less apparent thought and 'design' than we devote to screens.

— Russell Davies, **the internet of talking** <http://russelldavies.typepad.com/planning/2014/07/internetoftalking.html>

While **The Medium is the**

Message <http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org/#info> is a full-screen application that displays a scaled-up version of **the square-crop thumbnail for an object** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/b-is-for-beta/> it also tries to use your browser's text-to-speech capabilities to read aloud that object's medium. It may not be the kind of thing you want playing in a room full of people but alone in your room, or under a pair of headphones, it's fun to imagine it as a kind of **Music for Airports** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music_for_Airports for cultural heritage.



Text-to-speech <http://www.w3.org/community/speech-api/> is currently best supported in Chrome and Safari. Conversely the best support for **crisp and pixelated image-rendering** <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/CSS/image-rendering> is in Firefox. Because... computers, right?

For the time being **The Medium is the Message** <http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org/> lives in a little sand-box all by itself over here:

<http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org> <http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org/#info>

Eventually we hope to merge it back in to **the main collections website** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/> but since it's all brand-new we're going to put it some place where it can, if necessary, have little melt-downs and temper-tantrums without adversely affecting the rest of the collections website. It's also worth noting that some internal networks – like at a big company or organization – might

still disallow WebSockets traffic which is what we're using for this. If that's the case try waiting until you're home.



And now, for the Nerdy Bits: The rest of this blog post is captial-T technical so you can stop reading now if that's not your thing (though we think it's stil pretty interesting even if the details sound like gibberish).

The Medium is the

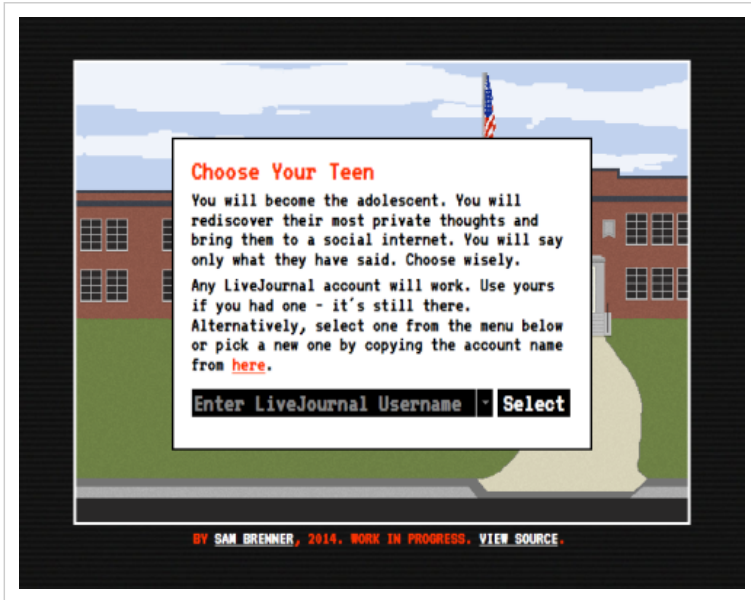
Message <http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org/> is part of a larger project to investigate a few different tools in order to understand how they might fit together and to what effect. They are:

- **Redis** <http://redis.io/> and in particular its implementation of **Publish/Subscribe messaging paradigm** <http://redis.io/topics/pubsub> – Every once in a while there's a piece of software that is released which feels like genuine magic. Arguably one of the last examples of this was

memcached <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memcached> originally written by Brad Fitzpatrick, for the website LiveJournal and without which entire slices of the web as we now know it wouldn't exist. Both Redis and memcached are similar in spirit in that their feature-set is limited by design but what they claim to do Just Works™ and both have broad support across the landscape of programming languages. That last piece is incredibly important since it means we can use Redis to bridge applications written in whatever language suits the problem best. We'll return to that idea in the discussion of "step 0" below.

- **Websockets** <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/WebSockets>
– WebSockets are a way for a web browser and a server to create and maintain a persistent connection and to shuttle messages back and forth. Normally the chatter between a browser and a server happens akin to the way two people might send each other postcards in the mail and WebSockets are more like a pair of teenagers calling each on the phone and talking for hours and hours and hours. Sort of like Pub/Sub for a web browser, right? WebSockets have been around for a few years now but they are still a bit of a new territory; super-cool but not without some pitfalls.
- **Go** <http://golang.org/> – Go is a programming language from the nice people at Google, that recently celebrated its fourth anniversary. It is part of growing trend in language design to find a middle ground between loosely typed languages, and the need to develop stable applications with a minimum of fussiness. Go is probably not the language we would develop a complex user-facing application in but for long-running services with well-defined boundaries it seems kind of perfect. (Go's notion of code-based **channels** <http://www.golang-book.com/10/index.htm> are a fascinating parallel to both Pub/Sub and WebSockets but that's a whole other blog post.)

Fun fact: The Labs' very own **Sam Brenner** <http://www.samjbrenner.com/> 's ITP thesis project called **Adventures of Teen Bloggers** <http://samjbrenner.com/notes/the-adventures-of-teen-bloggers/> is an archive of old LiveJournal accounts in the shape of an 8-bit video game!



In order to test all of those technologies and how they might play together we built **pubsocketd** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/go-pubsocketd/> which is a simple daemon written in Go that subscribes to a Pub/Sub channel and ferries those messages to a browser using Websockets (WS).

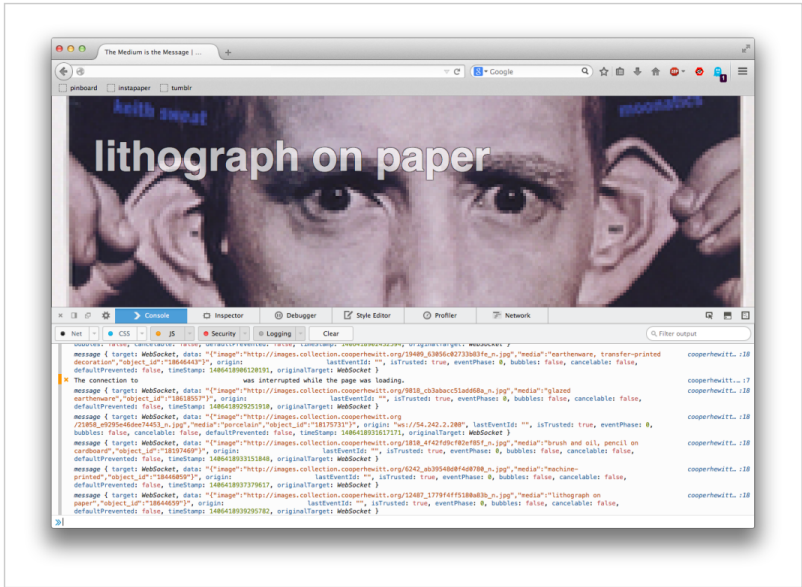
1. *Listen for messages from a specific (Redis) Pub/Sub channel*
2. *Accept incoming WS requests*
3. *Shuttle any messages from the Pub/Sub channel to all the open WS connections*

That's it. It is left up to WS clients (your web browser) to figure out what to do with those messages.

```
$> ./pubsocketd -ws-origin=http://example.com
2014/08/01 17:23:38 [init] listening for websocket requests on 127.0.0.1:8080/, from http://example.com
2014/08/01 17:23:38 [init] listening for pubsub messages from 127.0.0.1:6379 sent to the pubsocketd channel
2014/08/01 17:23:44 [10.20.30.40][10.20.30.40:56401][handshake] OK
2014/08/01 17:23:44 [10.20.30.40][10.20.30.40:56401][request] OK
2014/08/01 17:23:44 [10.20.30.40][10.20.30.40:56401][connect] OK
2014/08/01 17:23:53 [10.20.30.40][10.20.30.40:56401][send] OK
```

2014/08/01 17:24:05 [10.20.30.40][10.20.30.40:56401][send] OK
and so on...

The “step 0” in all of this is the ability for the collections website itself to connect to a Redis server and *send* a Pub/Sub message, whenever someone views an object, to the same channel that the pubsocketd server is listening to.

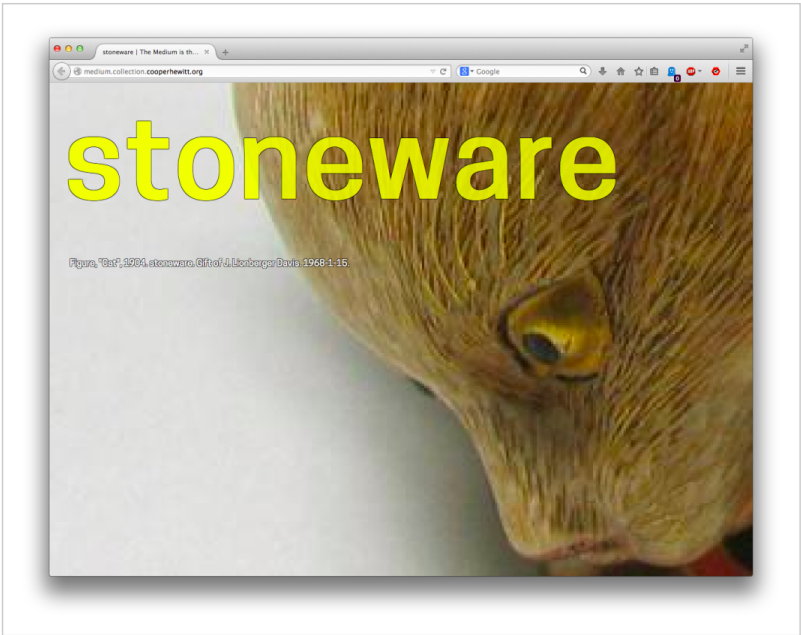


This allows for a nice clean separation of concerns and provides a simple way for related, but fundamentally discrete, applications to interact without getting up in each other’s business.

Given the scope of the project we probably could have accomplished the same thing, with less scaffolding, using **Server-Sent Events (SSE)** https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Server-sent_events/Using_server-sent_events but this was as much an exercise designed to get our feet wet with both WebSockets and Go so it’s been worth doing it the “hard way”.

Matthew Rothenberg <http://www.mroth.info/> , creator of the popular **EmojiTracker** <http://www.emojitracker.com/> , was nice enough to open-source the

Go-based SSE server endpoint <https://github.com/mroth/sseserver> he wrote to feed his application and we may eventually re-write **The Medium is the Message** <http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org/>, or future applications like it, to use that.



We've open-sourced the code for **pubsocketd** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/pubsocketd/> under a BSD license and we welcome suggestions, patches and (gentle) clue-bats:

**https://github.com/cooperhewitt/go-
pubsocketd** [https://github.com/cooperhewitt/go-
pubsocketd/](https://github.com/cooperhewitt/go-pubsocketd/)

Enjoy!



personal brand as the non-state actor of influence

still life with emotional contagion

**still life with emotional
contagion**



**still life with emotional
contagion**

Aaron Straup Cope / dConstruct 2014

*I had the privilege of being asked to speak at
dConstruct <http://dconstruct.org/> , this year. Many thanks to
Jeremy <http://adactio.com/journal/7414/> and all the organizers
for the invitation. This is what I said keeping in mind that what you read
here is never entirely what I said at the time and often what I meant to
say or should have said. If you want to hear exactly what I said **there's**
a handy audio recording of the
talk <http://huffduffer.com/dConstruct/178671> (along with
recordings of **everyone else's talks**
too <http://huffduffer.com/tags/dconstruct2014>). There's also **a**
really nice episode of the BBC's Click radio
program <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p025wk5b> on the*

subject of and interviewing some of the people who spoke this year.

...

Maybe I am just a bad person but I think if you asked people what it means to "live with the Network" in 2014 the answer is something approaching dread and resignation. If we have made the Network like oxygen then it's hard not to consider the air around us to have been made somehow suspect if not outright hostile. To wonder whether the Network itself has not been a kind of bait-and-switch.

So, that's a question I want to poke at today. I want to try and understand whether this feeling is justified or whether it is part of an attempt to shape a larger narrative in the service of someone else's motive.

A couple years ago Anil Dash wrote an essay titled "**The Web We Lost** <http://dashes.com/anil/2012/12/the-web-we-lost.html> " and later revisited it as a talk titled "**How We Lost the Web** <http://dashes.com/anil/2013/04/harvard.html> ". In both he offers a pretty damning critique of people building and working on the web, and in particular a self-identified "open web", in the late nineties and early aughts. He points out that people behaved in such a way that when asked to choose between themselves and Mark Zuckerberg everyone else chose the latter. It is a good and necessary piece of introspection but when Anil talks about a web that was lost I can't help but wondering: Did we really?

I am going to start with three short stories that may seem like non-sequiturs at first but hold on to them throughout the rest of the talk because they are all variations on the same set of questions and concerns.



This is a brick. It's not just any brick, though. It's a brick that is on display in the basement of the South Tower of the 9/11 Memorial, formerly the World Trade Center, in New York City.

It's a brick from **Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad Pakistan** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden%27s_compound_in_Abbottabad , where he was killed by American special forces in 2011. If you look closely you can see that the display case also has a photo – **yes, that photo** <https://www.flickr.com/photos/whitehouse/5680724572/> – of the US President and some of his advisors and cabinet members

anxiously watching a live video of the event from the situation room in Washington DC.

I am still at a loss for words to describe this image except to stay that it seems like the most potent example of a "hero object" – a proxy device for a larger history and set of shared cues and signals – that I've seen in recent memory. Not the brick itself but the decision to place – or "contextualize" as we like to say in the museum business – the brick in this space feels like the encapsulation of every single what-the-fuck moment that has occurred in the last 13 years. From the realization that the planes hitting the World Trade Center were doing so deliberately, to the realization that America was about to devote all its energy and turn all its attention to the question of revenge, to the realization that **those orange jumpsuits** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/01/17/sunmulet/#si-time-020> are now being used as a semiotic media device to... well, it hasn't stopped yet.

But maybe you had to be there to feel this way. In fifty years that brick may not hold any more charge to an eight-year old of the future than a sixteenth-century waterwheel does to an eight-year old today. I honestly don't know what an eight-year old, past or present, is supposed to take away from that brick except maybe a lesson in the construction of triumphal narrative book-ending and possibly schadenfreude.

We could spend all day talking about the 9/11 Memorial and its multiple personalities as a museum, as a mausoleum (literally), as a

borderline atrocity exhibition sculpture park and as a genuinely important catalog, or registry, of the principals who intersected with the event: The individuals trapped in the towers, the first responders; the workers involved in the cleanup; the families. Or we could focus on the relationship between abstraction and historical detail – by no means unique to the 9/11 Memorial – and the question of how to convey the meaning and impact of an historical event, over time.

It's a complicated space. Above all it is a luxury – perhaps an indulgence – that New York City and the United States has allowed itself but more than anything I left thinking: *Would that every tragedy be afforded the same degree of remembering.*



A couple of years ago while attending a conference in the Netherlands I heard the following story. I heard the story more than once but since then I have not been able to confirm the facts or the institution in question so you should take what I say with a commensurate grain of salt.

The story goes that as a consequence of the 30% across-the-board funding cuts to cultural heritage organizations, from the European Union, that one institution had been forced to de-accession something on the order of 30,000 objects. To make matters worse the institution was not only forced to de-accession the objects but, presumably because of staffing and resource issues, were not in a position to find anyone to

acquire the objects in kind. So they binned them. They literally tossed 30,000 objects that had previously been deemed important enough to keep in a museum or archive in to the garbage.

What strikes me about this story is less the decision, unfortunate as it is, to discard all those objects but rather the opportunity not seen or acted upon: Why not offer the public the chance to safe guard those objects until such a time the museum might be able to reclaim its custodial duties. Which may be never but it's the sort of thing that could be accomplished with little more than a spreadsheet listing the accession number of the object in question and contact information for the person who has taken that object in to their care.

Remember: All the objects are already set to go to landfill so any attempt at preservation is forward motion. Even if 5% of the participants were to drop off the face of the planet and another 5% were to destroy their objects that still means you've managed to save 27,000 objects. Not to mention fostering a sense of ownership and participation in the act of preserving cultural heritage.

Update: According to Marrije

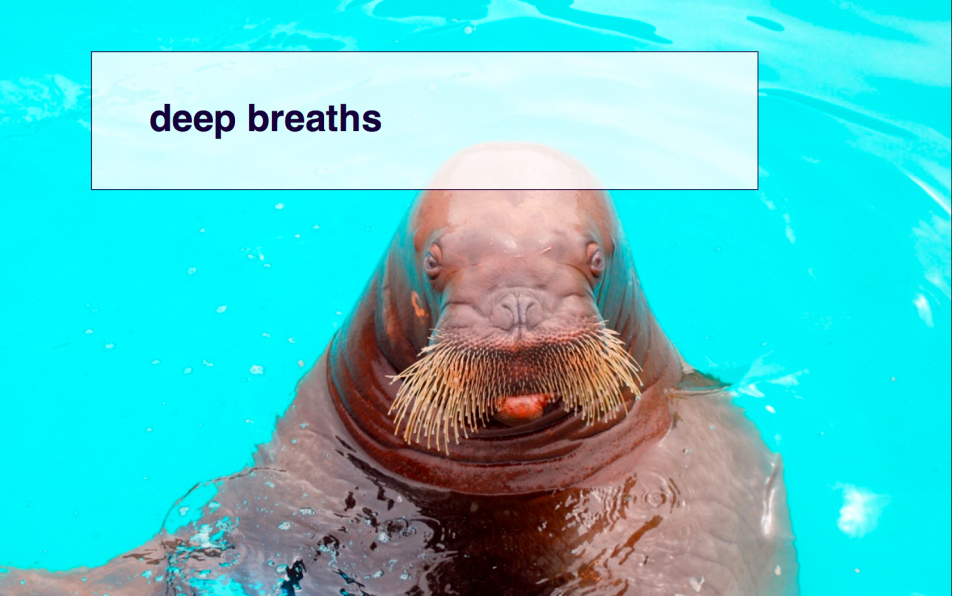
Schaake <https://twitter.com/marrije/status/507864067185573889> *it turns out the institution in question was able to save all those works* <http://www.kit.nl/kit/Bibliotheekcollectie> *in the end.*



It's worth considering that archivists – as a professional class – have only ever known – in an historical time-scale – war and looting and pillaging and general strife. Which means they have done a more than pretty good job of it when seen in that light. Despite occasional losses or lapses of professional or ethical judgement along the way they have kept most of the things safe under some pretty dire circumstances.

So it's not hard to imagine that they – and again I'm speaking of the entire professional class in the abstract – might express some doubts about the long-term viability of something most of us can't even conceptualize: electricity. And given their experience they would be forgiven for holding that opinion. That is something to think about

whenever we talk about digital preservation.

A photograph of a walrus swimming in clear blue water. The walrus is looking directly at the camera, showing its large, wrinkled head and a prominent, light-colored mustache. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image, containing the text "deep breaths" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

deep breaths

Okay, now I am going to commit the cardinal sin of technology-related conference talks so I am going to try to both do it in spades and make it fun.

I am going to quote William Gibson. Not only am I going to quote William Gibson I am going to quote the single most quoted passage he has written. The passage that has been quoted so many time that, like the city of Florence which has been photographed so many times, it no longer exists.

Then, I am going to quote William Gibson, again.

You are under no obligation **but since Jeremy is recording the audio of this talk** <http://huffduffer.com/dConstruct/178671> for posterity I'd like to invite to read along with me, at the top of your lungs.

“The future has already arrived. It’s just not evenly distributed yet.”

I know, right?

**“The street finds its
own use for things.”**

No, really...



Artisanal Vinyl Inc specialises in affordable design classics. For over thirty years, we've helped you save money while satisfying your inner design nerd, and keeping up with the Joneses online. The age of exclusivity is over. Artisanal Vinyl is proud to present the Charles and Ray Eames Collection, a set of the most famous modern furniture of all time, now inflatable. We've taken these much-loved items, and not just revitalised them, but rebought them. The Classic Leather Lounge now comes with beer-holder armrests stabilising fins, for all-day use in the deep end. It's in a carry-on bag for weekend jaunts, too good in any environment, so you can Stay Classic all the time.

“by design”

What interests me about those two quotes is that they are essentially saying the same thing, but you rarely see them paired together. These two passages seem to me to be two sides of the same coin separated by a vantage point that is usually measured in economic means. They are interesting to me as someone who works in a design museum because the pairing of those two ideas nicely sums up one of the characteristics, or even dilemmas, most design museums have had building their collections.

That is: We have a fondness for and a bad habit of focusing on, sometimes exclusively, a kind of shiny and glossy future that has arrived only for the few who can afford those concept pieces and limited

edition runs which are themselves often little more than proxy objects that trade an association with and access to high-end manufacturing technologies for merit and value.

They are, no doubt, beautiful objects but the rationale for collecting them tends to fall apart when measured against the question of function in service of an audience.

It is my position that a design museum should be spending a lot more time collecting and studying those objects that you might associate with the second quote: Those objects where the "street" cobbles together to create a solution out of necessity and ingenuity absent the ability to simply burn the problem away with money.

In the Cooper Hewitt's defense we try to do some of this with Cynthia Smith's **Design for the Other**

90% <http://www.designother90.org/> series which is pretty much what it says on the tin. We should all of in the "Business" do more of it, though.

What both of the quotes share is the awareness of opportunity and an intention to exploit it.



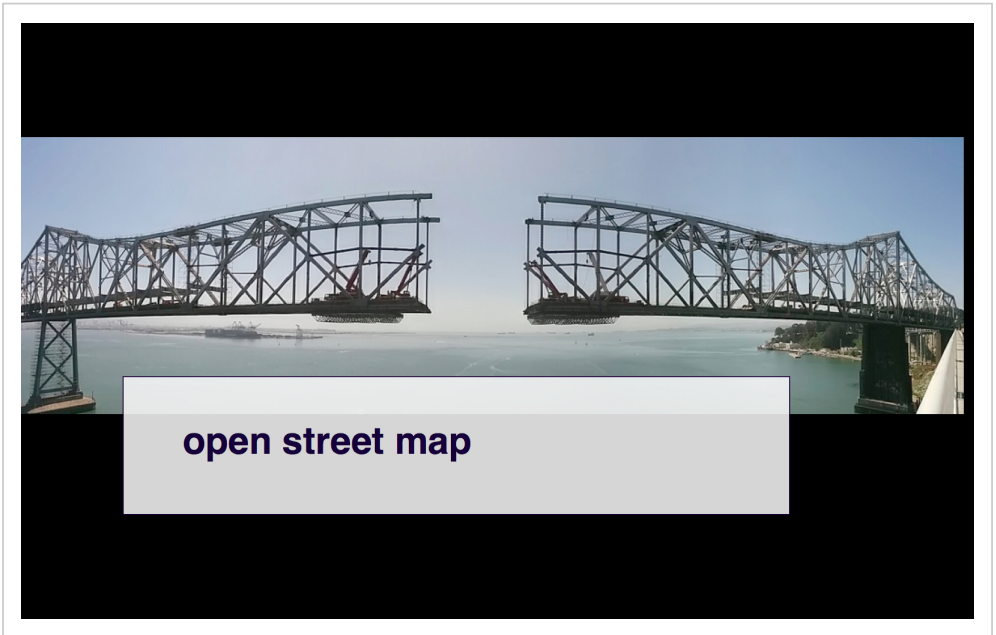
seeing in to the future

In economics opportunities are sometimes called "efficiencies" which, as I'll try to demonstrate, has always struck me as a bit of a misnomer. Sometimes they are referred to as "production functions" which might only have a charm if you're a computer programmer or a math nerd. I prefer the more colourful but no more benign "seeing in to the future".

They all speak of opportunity as the ability to influence circumstances a direction of one's choosing. It says nothing of a guaranteed outcome. Nor does it suggest that opportunity is or need be universally visible. As often as not opportunity is only seen as opportunity in so far as it can remain a closely guarded secret deployed

opposite someone else's ignorance.

High-speed trading remains the poster child for this phenomena precisely because the worst part of all the havoc that the practice has wrought on the financial markets is that, until we legislate otherwise, the traders involved haven't actually done anything wrong. They are simply those people who took the time to carefully read the mechanics, literally, of how high-speed trading works and saw an advantage – an opportunity – inherent in the system that no one else had noticed and then proceeded to exploit it.



And opportunity may not be seen even when it is hiding in plain sight. I often cite

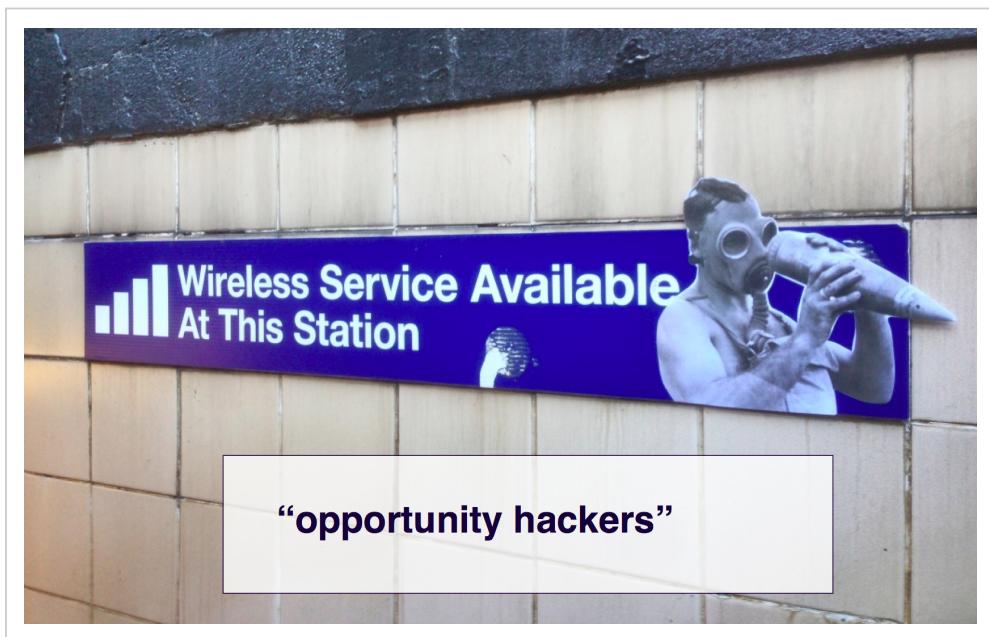
OpenStreetMap <http://www.openstreetmap.org/> (OSM) as an example of this because it feels like an instance of pure crystalized opportunity that still remains too abstract for people to wrap their heads around it.

OSM is in many ways the realization of a particularly woolly-eyed happy-happy dream a lot of people had of the Network and the web, in particular:

- *It is built bottom-up by a community of passionate users*
- *It is a source of high-quality, and constantly improving, free and open data*
- *It comes with a large suite of open source tools for doing stuff with all that data, that is increasingly find new uses in entirely other projects*
- *It has a convenient sticking-it-to-the-Man back-story (sorry Ordnance Survey)*
- *It's just sitting there, patiently waiting to be used when you're ready*

And finally, they're maps – those singular tokens representing an expression of history and control that used to be firmly in the hands of a small and not always well-intentioned elite. OSM provides all the raw material to challenge that system.

OSM still has a steep learning curve but you might think that given everything I've just described a lot more people than have would have seized on the opportunities that being able to create, to dictate, their own maps would afford. It just hasn't happened yet because, and there is no subtext or judgement in what I'm about to say, it's still a shape foreign to most eyes.



On the other hand some people get paid **to sit around all day doing nothing but look for opportunities and avenues to exploit them** <https://pinboard.in/u:straup/t:surveillance> in pretty much anything they can get their hands on. It's not just the intelligence services of the world but they **enjoy that privilege** <http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2014/11/03/nsa-director-offers-olive-branch-in-silicon-valley-speech/> on a scale no one else does. In turn, we bestow on them the fruits of our own imaginations in the ways we consider how they might seize on the opportunity, independent the reality, such a privilege presents them.

Have a think about that the next time you read an article about

the documents leaked by Edward Snowden and any other still-unnamed whistle blowers.



The other professional class who enjoy this status are the so-called "cool-hunters" whose job is to look for patterns in the mist. To frame those patterns as understanding and by extension opportunity and ultimately influence.

I once had a painting studio, back in the days before the Internet, which shared a balcony with a guy whose job was to read stacks of magazines about politics and policy journals and synthesize all that information in to reports. I have no idea what happened to those reports but he would sit on the balcony all day, exercising the influence of his opinion, from a comfy chair which made it seem like a pretty good job.

It's important to remember that many of **the earliest descriptions and articulations of weblogging** <http://radio-weblogs.com/0110772/stories/2002/10/03/personalKnowledgePublishingAndItsUsesInResearch.html> , by people who had a vested interest in the story they were telling, are almost exactly like the job I've just described only distributed and hyper-specialized and without the bottleneck of someone else's financial burden or approval to publish.

And let's be honest: That is something which has worked out pretty well, to varying degrees, for most of the people in this room or who would like to be in this room. The many different shades of weblogs, which really just means the web, quickly became vehicles with which to use personal brand as a kind of non-state actor for influence.



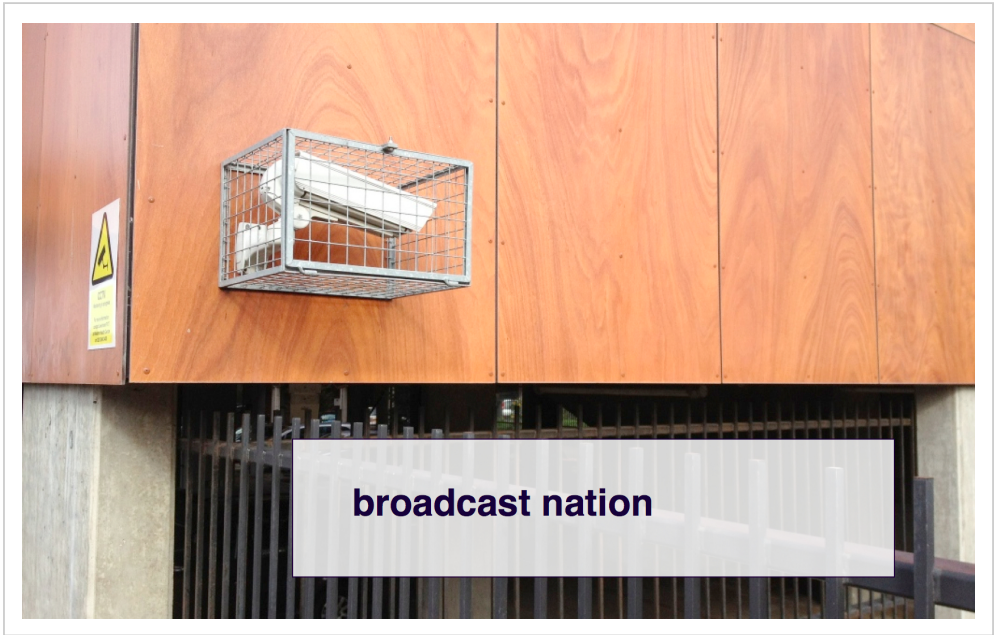
**we have always been at war
with the past**

Seen in the cold harsh reality of something like this photo, though, it is easy to understand that what we have dubbed "**clickbait** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clickbait> " as the ultimate commodification and realization, possibly even democratization, of cool-hunting.

This is where it starts to get murky. It gets murky because I could be wrong about this and even if I am right there is not necessarily the convenient satisfaction of a conspiracy at play. What I am trying to describe may just be a confluence of opportunities.

But there is definitely something in the air in the way people talk about what success looks like and how its measured and how it compares to other successes; things are measured in “kill time” with the assumption that there is only one chance to exact influence.

If the shelf-life of a success is measured in its fall-off rate for orchestrated "clicks" or views or the rate at which an action yields more "followers" then there is only the next thing. There is only now or, rather, even if there is a past there is no time valued enough to consider it.



The question I've been asking myself is whether by our focus if not our action we start to warp the underlining architecture – the conceptual architecture as much or more than the technical one – of the Network. Specifically those properties of the Network that made us fall in love with in the first place.

I can't decide if its a question of transience being normalized or permanence being denormalized but when the measure and mechanics of success dictate that we return to a model that we tried before and no one particularly liked – namely television – I can't help but wonder what we're doing. And why.

We are living through a rhetoric of ephemerality that seems to have two principal characteristics:

The first is that I think it benefits – in the otherwise benign and opportunistic manner that we grant private enterprise – a particular business model so there is cause from some quarters to champion it. If nothing else operating a broadcast pipe that does not have to concern itself with the messy issues of access and retrieval makes running a business that much easier. This is the phenomenon I sometimes describe as "engineering decisions being passed off as philosophy".

The second is that I think it is understood though perhaps not articulated as a coping mechanism. In a world where we are told that the intelligence services are tapping the physical cables that make up the Network and that they really do want to write down everything you do **in your permanent record** <http://idlewords.com/bt14.htm> or that, as has happened in Australia, all of that information **may and probably will be used against you** <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/26/privacy-fears-australian-surveillance-laws-digital-era> in a court of law it's tempting to imagine that there is such a thing as ephemerality.

Which is problematic because it replaces what is fundamentally a social question – one of means (*how data is collected*) and admissibility (*whether information collected in a manner contrary to the social norm is acceptable*) – with a technical solution that from a practical-like-how-does-it-work perspective is fantasy.

Why is this important? One articulation of why can be found in Anab Jain's **Valley of the Meatpuppets** <http://superflux.in/blog/valley-of-the-meatpuppets> in which she writes:

“To a more multidimensional world with a plurality of histories, presents and futures will help reveal the manufactured promises, and give us the capacity to choose, navigate and manoeuvre our journeys. In this lies the idea of taking the long view, looking at long stretches of the past, to see these evolving new ways of being from an imaginary vantage point in a future.”

– Anab Jain

Go now, and read the entire

thing <http://superflux.in/blog/valley-of-the-meatpuppets> .

I'll wait...



Or put another way: Recall has always been a power dynamic.

You see this throughout history: In the right to assembly; In the question of access to basic literacy; The entire notion of a public library; The restrictions around intellectual property; Paywalls and the rights to broadcast or re-broadcast. **Whether it's been through malice or negligence or simple circumstance the ability to not only see in to the future but see in to the past has not been an opportunity open to all.**

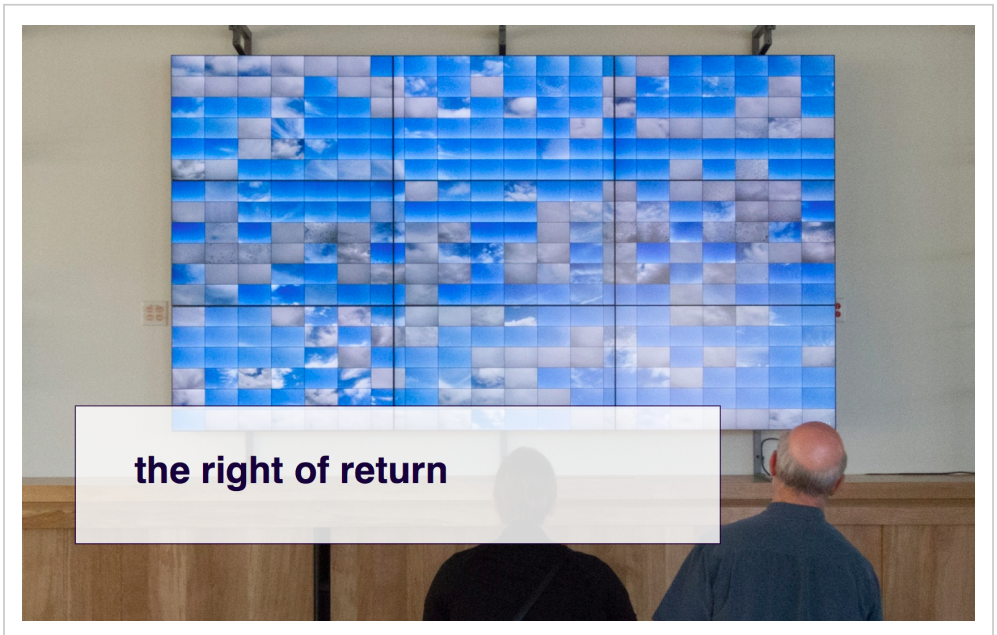
More recently work around **memory**

"reconsolidation" http://www.wired.com/2012/02/ff_forgetting_pill/all/ which, through the use of protein inhibitors, has allowed researchers to seemingly erase individual memories in lab rats. This is all work that's being done to help remediate conditions like PTSD and other traumas but if it is found to be successful in humans you can be sure that it will become political.

This is what makes the Network and the web in particular so important:

The web gave us the ability to return to a thing outside the shared (or master) narrative at a time of one's own choosing. Of shifting time in the service of one's own interest or in the service of simply coming to an understanding of one's own interests.

It lowered the barrier to speak to the future and to listen to the past. Not because we know why or can quantify its return in advance but because we believe what is most important is simply the ability to do so.



Access and access at the time of your own choosing is a subtle but important distinction and if we are talking about the opportunity of the Network itself, it is this.

Imagine a world in which access to an exchange of culture required we all have to gather around our computers *at the same time* in order to **read Maciej's latest blog post** <http://www.idleworlds.com/> . Some of us can and if you asked I would tell you *it sucked*.

When television was the only opportunity we had to gather

together outside of and to imagine a world larger than our immediate surroundings we managed to craft genuinely meaningful experiences from it. It would be wrong to suggest otherwise but it would equally wrong to ignore how quickly we opted for the alternative modes – opportunities – that the web provided.

I think that should tell us something and that it is perhaps a quality of the Network being overlooked and perhaps being lost entirely as we devote more and more time and infrastructure in an effort to going viral.

Because we are not all, or will not always be, the kinds of people seeking an audience of many. What the web made possible – at a scale never seen before – was the ability for a individual to discover their so-called "community of five". In time. It was the ability for one person to project their voice and for it to echo out across the Network long enough for someone else to find it. It gave us the ability to warm up to an idea, to return to it.

That access to recall is what makes the Network special to me. That is the opportunity which has been granted to us which we would be wrong to confuse with success or even discoverability. We all suffer from degrees of not-in-my-lifetime-itis but that is a kind of deviant behaviour we have already perfected so maybe we should not apply its metrics to the Network, for everyone's benefit.



As has been mentioned **I work at a museum** <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/> . As part of the museum's re-opening in December we are **building, from scratch, a custom NFC-enabled stylus** <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/new-experience/designing-pen/> which we will give to every visitor upon entry. The stylus (or pen) will allow you to manipulate objects on interactive tables as well as to sketch and design your own creations. That is, literally, what the pointy end of the stylus is for.

The other end is used to touch an object label and record the ID of the object associated with it. That's it. Objects are stored on the pen as you wander around the museum and are then transferred back to the

museum during or at the end of your visit and are available for retrieval via a unique shortcode assigned to every visit.

If you buy a ticket online and we know who you are then all the items you've collected or created should already be accessible via your museum account waiting for you by the time you get home or even by the time you get your phone out on the way to the subway. (If you don't already have an account then the visit is considered "anonymous" and that's just fine, too.)

The use of the pen to collect objects has a couple of objectives:

1. *To simply do what people have always wanted to be able to in museums and been forced to accomplish themselves: To remember what you saw during your visit. People **take pictures of wall***

***labels** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/label-whisperer/> , I think, not because they really want to but because there is no other mechanism for recall.*

2. *To get out of the way; to be intensely quiet and polite. The pen will likely enjoy a certain amount of time in the spotlight but my hope is that it will be successful enough that, when that attention fades, it might simply be taken for granted. To be a necessary technology in the service of memory, that dissolves in to normalcy, rather than being something you need to pay attention to or have an "experience" with.*

3. *To give people the confidence to believe that they don't necessarily need to do anything with the things they collect in the moment. To have the confidence to believe that we will keep the things they collect during their visit safe for a time when they will once again be relevant to them. For a person to see the history of one visit in association with all their other visits.*

The pen itself is a fairly sophisticated piece of technology because it turns out that taking the conceptually simple act of "bookmarking" objects in real-life and making it simple in hardware and software is still actually hard. We are not doing this simply for the sake of the challenge but because it provides a way for the museum itself to live with the Network. In these ways we are trying to assert patience. We are, after all, a museum and our only purpose is to play the long game.

*I totally didn't say that last paragraph on stage. I should have, though. Instead I talked a little bit about **oh yeah,** **that** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/03/15/ephemera/#ohyeahthat> which is a photo-sharing website which lets you upload a photo and then doesn't let you see it for a year. I talked about it as an experiment in a kind of enforced patience with the Network. I also talked about it an exercise in trying to build a tool that could operate without the adult supervision of my time or money (or much of it, anyway) such that it not be subject to the anxieties of being immediately successful. This, it seems to me, is the work ahead of us. It is not about **oh yeah,***

that <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/03/15/ephemera/#o>
hyeahthat *or any particular class of applications but about*
understanding why we are doing this at all and building things to those
ends.

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers slightly curled, holding a miniature world. On the tips of the fingers, there are small, green, moss-like patches. On these patches, there are tiny human figures. One figure stands on the left patch, another sits on the edge, and a third stands on the right patch. The background is a warm, out-of-focus brown.

a communal proof

If you haven't read Thomas Piketty's **Capital in the 21st Century** <http://piketty.pse.ens.fr/en/capital21c2> I would recommend you do. One of the things that makes the book so powerful is that Piketty has been able to shape an argument through the rigorous use of historical data across a number of countries. The data is incomplete in historical terms: The data for the UK is only available from about the 1840s onwards, for the US data becomes available in the 1920s and so on. The one country where the data is available in a comprehensive manner is France. Because they went to the trouble of collecting it. One of the first acts of the state following the French Revolution was to perform an audit of and to continue collecting reliable estimations of wealth and property.

It is that diligence in record-keeping which made it possible for Piketty to illustrate his point in fact rather than intuition. On the web we have been given a similar opportunity to project our stories outwards in the future; to demonstrate a richer past to the present that will follow this one. It is unlikely that it will or even should yield the same fact-based analysis as Piketty's book. That is not the point. The point is that if we subscribe to a point world view that values a multiplicity of stories and understands that history is nuanced across experience and which recognizes that the ability to look backwards as much as forwards is where opportunity lies then we would do well to remember that many of those aspirations are afforded by the Network and in particular the web.

Those qualities are not inherent in the Network no more than access to opportunity guarantees success. **They require care and consideration** <http://aworkinglibrary.com/writing/hypertext-as-an-agent-of-change/> and if it seems like the Network has turned a bit poison we might do well to recognize that maybe we have also been negligent in our expectations, both of the Network and of ourselves.

Damn... you can almost see me exploding in to a TED-sized supernova of emotive jazz-hands at this point. As above, I did not in fact say this while on stage. I tried to say something like it, though, because I think it's true.

One refrain I hear a lot these days is that it's all gotten "too hard". That the effort required to create something on the Network and effort to ensure its longevity has morphed in to something far beyonds

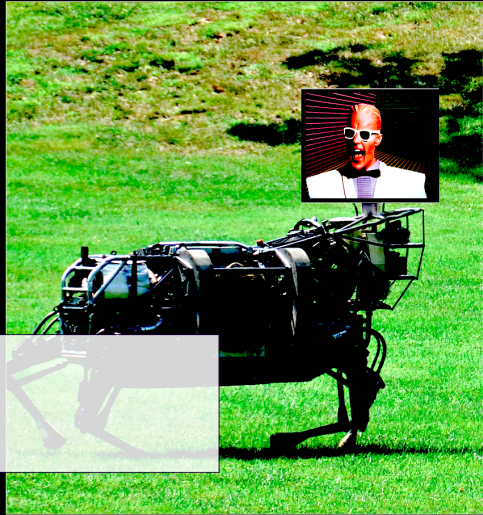
the means of the individual. I am always struck by these comments not because I think we ought to be leveraging-the-fuck out of the latest, greatest advances in application framework or hosting solutions but for the simple reason that:

We managed to build a lot of cool shit on the back of 56Kb modems. We built a lot of cool shit – including entire communities – on top of a technical infrastructure that is a pale shadow of what we have available to us today. *We know how to do this.*

It is important to remember that the strength of the web is in its simplicity but in that simplicity – a Network of patient documents – is the opportunity far fewer of us enjoyed before it existed. The opportunity to project one's voice and to posit an argument which might have even a little more weight, or permanance, in the universe than shouting in the wind which is all most people have ever enjoyed. The opportunity to be part of an historical dialog because having an opinion is not de-facto "over-sharing".

It is important to remember that the Network has given us the opportunity of a different measure of success.

thank you
@thisisaaronland



About a month after dConstruct I did another talk, as part of Eyebeam's *LittleNets* <http://eyebeam.org/events/littlenets> exhibition, titled *this is my brick / there are many like it but this one is mine* <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/10/06/interpretation/#brick> . The two talks can be taken separately but at the same time they part of the same larger conversation.

2014-09-11



a colophon for bias

debate is history

debate is history

debate is history

Aaron Straup Cope / The Search is Over!



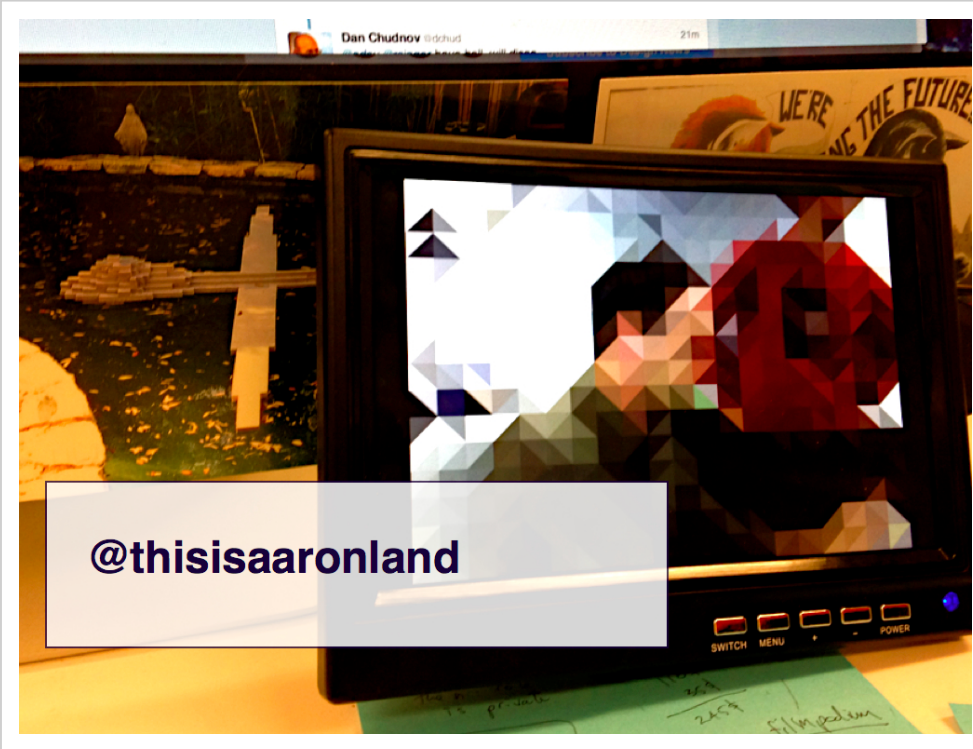
*On the last day of my trip to the UK I delivered one of the keynotes at the **The Search is***

***Over!** <http://www.searchisover.org/> workshop. Unfortunately I was the guy who delivered a talk and was then all like "Sorry folks, I'm so busy I have to run a catch a airplane!" but the circumstances of my visit meant I needed to do exactly that.*

*I was able to stay for a short amount of time after my talk and that was lovely and I am grateful to **Mitchell***

***Whitelaw** <http://mtchl.net/> and the other oragnizers for the invitation.*

I've included my slides below, mostly for posterity. I didn't have notes for this talk as it was largely a history and consideration of work the museum has done to make sense of its own collection <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/> *so the arrangement of the slides will have to serve as their own narrative. Towards the end I touched on the idea of a "colophon for bias" and by extension an "iconography of bias", a subject I hope to write about a bit more on the **Cooper Hewitt Labs** blog* <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/> *soon.*



An aerial photograph of a city park, likely Central Park in New York City, showing dense green trees and surrounding urban buildings. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the lower-left portion of the image, containing a URL.

<http://cprhw.tt/68sh>

<http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/>

<http://cprhw.tt/1dkr>

<https://github.com/cooperhewitt>



labs.cooperhewitt.org

Language is culture

Ingredients

- * 1 8 ounce piece chunk bacon
- * 3 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- * 3 pounds lean stew beef, cut into 2-inch cubes
- * 1 onion, sliced
- * Salt and pepper
- * 2 tablespoons flour
- * 3 cups red wine, young and full bodied
- * 3 cups beef stock
- * 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- * 2 cloves mashed garlic
- * 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- * 1 bay leaf, crumbled
- * 20 small white onions
- * 3 1/2 tablespoons butter
- * herb bouquet (4 parsley sprigs, one-half bay leaf, one-quarter teaspoon thyme, tied in cheesecloth)
- * 1 pound fresh mushrooms, quartered

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
2. Remove bacon rind and cut into lardons (sticks 1/4-inch thick and 1 1/2 inches long). Simmer rind and lardons for 10 minutes in 1 1/2 quarts water. Drain and dry.
3. Sauté lardons in 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a flameproof casserole over moderate heat for 2 to 3 minutes to brown lightly. Remove to side dish with a slotted spoon.
4. Heat fat in casserole until almost smoking. Dry beef in paper towels; it will not brown if it is damp. Add beef, a few pieces at a time, and sauté until nicely browned on all sides. Add it to the lardons. In the same fat, brown the sliced vegetables. Pour out the excess fat.
5. Return the beef and bacon to the casserole and toss with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Then sprinkle on the flour and toss again to coat the beef lightly. Set casserole uncovered in middle position of preheated oven for 4 minutes. Toss the meat again and return to oven for 4 minutes (this browns the flour and covers the meat with a light crust). Remove casserole and turn oven down to 325 degrees.
6. Stir in wine and 2 to 3 cups stock, just enough so that the meat is barely covered. Add the tomato paste, garlic, herbs and bacon rind. Bring to a simmer on top of the stove. Cover casserole and set in lower third of oven. Regulate heat so that liquid simmers very slowly for 3 to 4 hours. The meat is done when a fork pierces it easily.
7. While the beef is cooking, prepare the onions and mushrooms. Heat 1 1/2 tablespoons butter with one and one-half tablespoons of the oil until bubbling in a skillet. Add onions and sauté over moderate heat for about 10 minutes, rotating them so they will brown as evenly as possible. Be careful not to break their skins. You cannot expect them to brown uniformly. Add 1/2 cup of the stock, salt and pepper to taste and the herb bouquet. Cover and simmer slowly for 40 to 50 minutes until the onions are perfectly tender but hold their shape, and the liquid has evaporated. Remove herb bouquet and set onions aside.
8. Wipe out skillet and heat remaining oil and butter over high heat. As soon as you see butter has begun to subside, indicating it is hot enough, add mushrooms. Toss and shake pan for 4 to 5 minutes. As soon as they have begun to brown lightly, remove from heat. When the meat is tender, pour the contents of the casserole into a sieve set over a saucepan.
9. Wash out the casserole and return the beef and lardons to it. Distribute the cooked onions and mushrooms on top. Skim fat off sauce in saucepan. Simmer sauce for 1-2 minutes, skimming off additional fat as it rises. You should have about 2 1/2 cups of sauce thick enough to coat a spoon lightly. If too thin, boil it down rapidly. If too thick, mix in a few tablespoons stock. Taste carefully for seasoning.
10. Pour sauce over meat and vegetables. Cover and simmer 2 to 3 minutes, basting the meat and vegetables with the sauce several times. Serve in casserole, or arrange stew on a platter surrounded with potatoes, noodles or rice, and decorated with parsley.

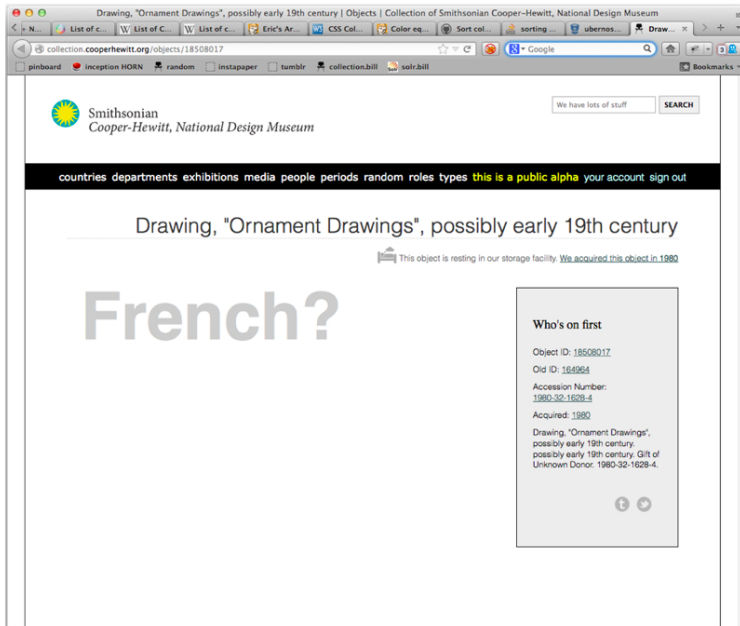
**Julia Child's Bœuf
Bourguignon: Brwn,rmv½c
lardon,2lb beef,carrot&onion.
Flr,s+p. 8m@450F; +2c
pinot&Stock/T tompaste/
BqtGrni. Cvr3h@325F.**

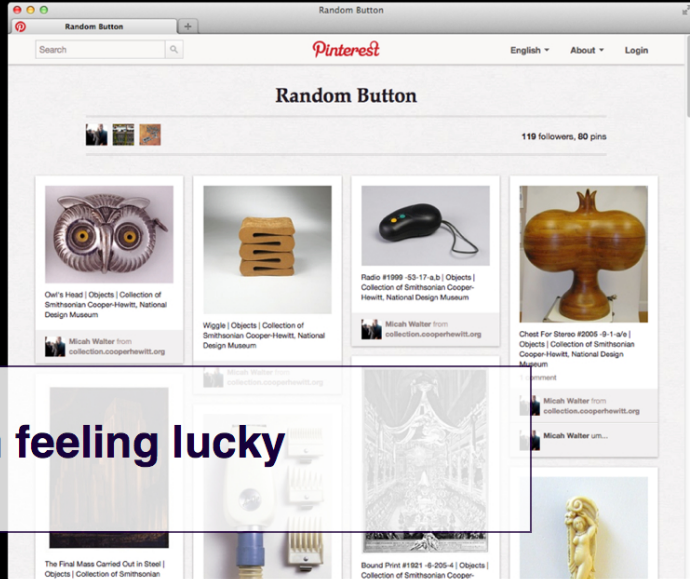
– @cookbook

“Except for sauces, one does not often measure oil by tablespoons. One pours it out of a bottle into the pan. One uses one's eyes and one's loaf.”

– Elizabeth David

Also this...







This object hasn't had its picture taken yet.

Shower, 1986-61-220 a.b. ca. 1980-90 / This object's accession number is 1986-61-220 a.b. and is dated ca. 1980-90 / This is from the [Product Design and Decorative Arts](#) department



This object hasn't had its picture taken yet.

Double Shower, 1986-61-221 a.b. ca. 1980 / This object's accession number is 1986-61-221 a.b. and is dated ca. 1980 / This is from the [Product Design and Decorative Arts](#) department



Sail, 1986-61-215, ca. 1980 / This object's accession number is 1986-61-215 and is dated ca. 1980 / This is from the [Product Design and Decorative Arts](#) department



This object hasn't had its picture taken yet.

Sail, 1986-61-214 / This object's accession number is 1986-61-214 / This is from the [Product Design and Decorative Arts](#) department



This object hasn't had its picture taken yet.

Sail, 1986-61-213 / This object's accession number is 1986-61-213 / This is from the [Product Design and Decorative Arts](#) department



Grass, 1986-61-212 a.b. ca. 1980 / This object's accession number is 1986-61-212 a.b. and is dated ca. 1980 / This is from the [Product Design and Decorative Arts](#) department

managing absence



This object hasn't had its picture taken yet.

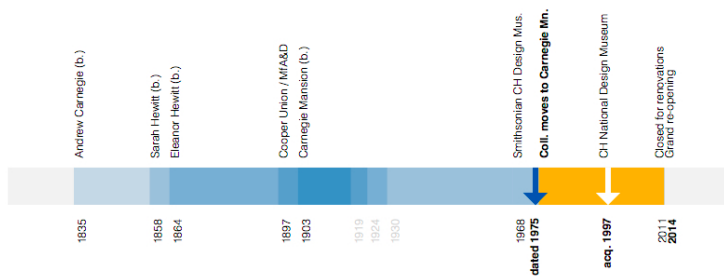


This object hasn't had its picture taken yet.

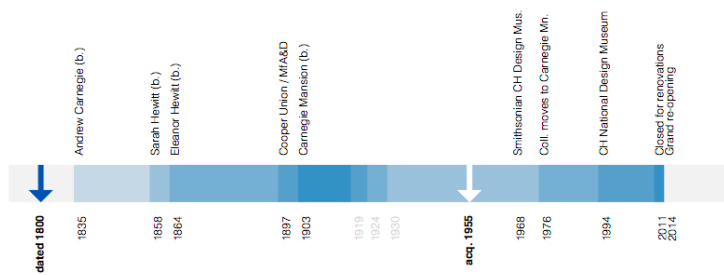


This object hasn't had its picture taken yet.

the velocity of context



life before andrew



```
<script type="text/javascript">

var context = [
  { 'name': 'Andrew Carnegie', 'start': 1835, 'end': 1919 },
  { 'name': 'Sarah Hewitt', 'start': 1858, 'end': 1930 },
  { 'name': 'Eleanor Hewitt', 'start': 1864, 'end': 1924 },
  { 'name': 'Cooper Union', 'start': 1897, 'end': 1967 },
  { 'name': 'Carnegie mansion', 'start': 1903, 'end': 0 },
  { 'name': 'Smithsonian', 'start': 1976, 'end': 0 },
  { 'name': 'CHNDM', 'start': 1994, 'end': 0 },
  { 'name': 'Renovations', 'start': 2011, 'end': 2014 },
  { 'name': 'Re-opening', 'start': 2014, 'end': 0 },
];

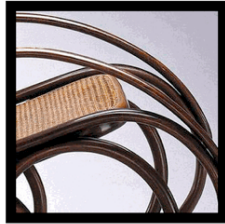
var event = {
  'start': 1955,
  'end': 1975,
  'echo': 1971
};

var tl = new timeline("timeline", context);
tl.draw(event);

</script>
```

<http://cprhw.tt/wzzd>

<https://github.com/cooperhewitt/d3-timeline-event-horizon>





design thinking?



solutioneering



Drawing, "The Life Boat", study for watercolor, "Wreck of the 'Iron Crown'";.... Point of brush and black ink, brush and black wash, black chalk, brush and.... Gift of Charles Savage Homer, Jr., 1912-12-10

There is one person is associated with this object Winslow Homer's role was as Artist This object is part of Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design collection.

Print, "The Coolest Spot in New England-Summit of Mount Washington, from.... Wood engraving on off-white wove paper. Museum purchase through gift of the Estate of David Wolfe Bishop, 1968-27-10

There is one person is associated with this object Winslow Homer's role was as Artist This object is part of Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design collection.

Drawing, "Canoe with Three Men", probably 1897 Crayon on paper. Gift of Charles Savage Homer, Jr., 1912-12-44

There is one person is associated with this object Winslow Homer's role was as Artist This object is part of Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design collection.



shit, i forgot the post-it notes....



we will cloundsourse an ideated future



<http://cprhw.tt/18rx>

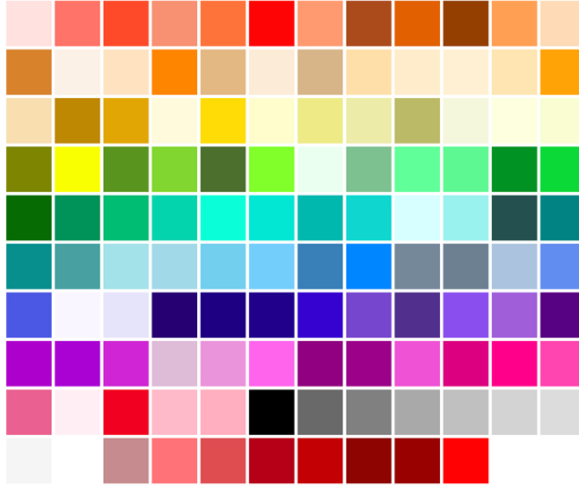
<https://github.com/straup/plumbing-shannon-server>



Colors!

Color, or colour, is one of the attributes we're interested in exploring for collection browsing. Bearing in mind that only a fraction of our collection currently has images, here's a first pass.

Objects with images now have up to five representative colors attached to them. The colors have been selected by our robotic eye machines who scour each image in small chunks to create color averages. These have then been harvested and snapped to the grid of 118 different colors — derived from the [CSS3 palette and naming conventions](#) — below to make navigation a little easier.



#1e90ff | Our collection by color | Collection of Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum

collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/1e90ff/

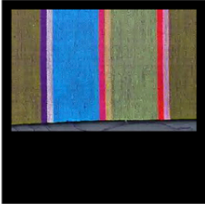
pinboard instapaper tumblr **soir** upload museums and th...

You - The Collection - Random Search

Objects in the shade of ■

We have 8 objects that **overlap with this color**

The closest color to #1e90ff is **dodger blue** which in robot-speak is **#1e90ff** ■



■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

■ ■ ■ ■

OBJECTS IN THE SHADE OF

We have 52 objects that overlap with this color in **the CSS4 palette** and this is page 1 of 2

Sometimes called "**rebeccapurple**" in the robot-speak of **the CSS4 color palette** this is known as **#663399**

Or perhaps you'd like to see the **intersection** between this color and **Crayola**® or **CSS3** palettes?



Sidewell, "Ascending Suns", 1958-70 Hand-folded and dyed Japanese paper. Gift of Barbara White. **2000-64-41**
There are **1 people** in **2 roles** are associated with this object
This object is part of **Wallcoverings** collection.



Textile Technique: warp-printed. Anonymous bequest in memory of Albert and Rebecca Elsberg. **1938-82-50-a**
There are **2 people** in **2 roles** are associated with this object
This object is part of **Textiles** collection.



Textile Technique: printed. Anonymous bequest in memory of Albert and Rebecca Elsberg. **1938-82-62**
There is **one person** is associated with this object
This object is part of **Textiles** collection. There are **2 images** of this object.

OBJECTS IN THE SHADE OF ■

We have 107 objects that overlap with this color in **the Crayola® palette** and this is page 3 of 3

Sometimes called "**Neon Carrot**" in the robot-speak of **the Crayola® color palette** this is known as **#ffa343**
Or perhaps you'd like to see the **intersection** between this color and **CSS3** or **CSS4** palettes?



This object has been digitized but we can't show it to you just yet.



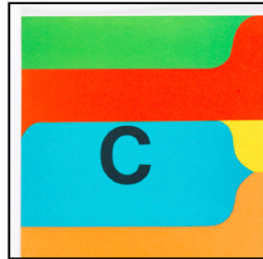
Textile printed. **1939-27-13**

There is **one person** associated with this object This object is part of **Textiles** collection.



Poster, "Russian Youth Perspective", 1976 Offset lithograph on white paper. Gift of Unknown Donor. **1980-32-1240**

This object is part of **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** collection.



Poster, "Manpower Temporary Services - [Alphabet Letters on File Folders]",.... Offset lithograph on paper. **1991-69-35**

There are **3 people** in **3 roles** associated with this object This object is part of **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** collection.

Copy is Interface

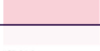
Erika Hall, Mule Design Studio, San Francisco
Future of Web Apps, 4 October, 2007, London

<http://cprhw.tt/b2r6>

<http://www.sldshare.net/mulegirl/copy-is-interface>

WHAT COLOR IS TEXTILE ?

It depends on **how you look at it**

Source	Crayola	CSS3	CSS4
 #66635e	 #6e5160 "eggplant"	 #696969 "dim grey"	 #696969 "dimgrey"
 #f3e882	 #fce883 "yellow"	 #f0e68c "khaki"	 #f0e68c "khaki"
 #6c5a9d	 #7851a9 "royal purple"	 #708090 "slate gray"	 #663399 "rebeccapurple"
 #f3d4da	 #fbc02d "thistle"	 #ffe4e1 "misty rose"	 #ffe4e1 "mistyrose"
 #b56a72	 #d7154 "blast off bronze"	 #cd5c5c "indian red"	 #cd5c5c "indianred"

extruders

<http://cprhw.tt/wzrd>

<https://github.com/cooperhewitt/palette-server>

Objects in the shade of

We have 132 objects that overlap with this color and this is page 2 of 6

The closest color to #fefdcb is lemon chiffon which in robot-speak is #ffffcc



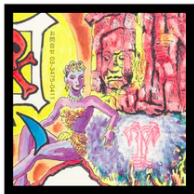
Matchsafe wood. Gift of Stephen W. Brener and Carol B. Brener. **1978-146-73**

This object is part of [Product Design and Decorative Arts](#) collection.



"Lodewijk XIII (1601-43), koning van Frankrijk" **SK-A-278**

This object is part of the [Rijkmuseum](#) collection. It is not part of the Cooper-Hewitt's collection and you're seeing it here because you've enabled the [experimental Rijkscolor](#) feature.



Poster, "Lafont Museum Hanzelaar", 2000 Off-set lithograph on white wove paper. Gift of Sara and Marc Benda. **2009-12-18**

This object is part of [Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design](#) collection. There are 2 images of this object.



↑
Cooper-Hewitt



↑
Cooper-Hewitt



↑
Rijksmuseum

Hallo, Meneer konijn!

cultural exchange

<http://cprhw.tt/2Inv>

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/play/robot-rothko>



cotton

Single, 1850-1900. Medium cotton. Technique printed on plain weave. 1943-67 6-4

<http://cprhw.tt/g35b>

<http://medium.collection.cooperhewitt.org/>

<http://cprhw.tt/w7t0>

<https://github.com/cooperhewitt/go-pubsocketd>

WE FOUND 6 RESULTS

in all categories where the query is kitten that have images. The results are sorted in **descending** order by height.

SEARCH RESULTS



Sidewall, "Nursery Rhymes", ca. 1950
Machine printed on paper. Gift of Suzanne Lipschitz. **1991-89-23**
This object was made by **Child Life Wallpaper Co.**. This object is part of **Wallcoverings** collection. There are **2 images** of this object.



Sidewall, "Pussy Willow", 1949 Machine-printed. Gift of Suzanne Lipschitz. **1991-89-79-a,b**
This object was made by **York Wall Paper Company**. This object is part of **Wallcoverings** collection. There are **2 images** of this object.



Drawing, "Design for Tapestry with Cats and Fish", 1950s-70s Graphite on dark cream paper. Gift of Mr. Eric and Mrs. Sylvia Boserup. The Trade Museum's Archives. **1993-121-84**
This object is part of **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** collection.



Figure, "Cat and kitten", late 19th-early 20th century Painted brass. Gift of Anonymous Donor. **1949-49-35**
This object is part of **Product Design and Decorative Arts** collection. There are **2 images** of this object.



Border, "Peter Rabbit and His Friends", 1946-48 Engraved copper rollers on paper. **1991-124-1-a,b**
This object is part of **Wallcoverings** collection.



Textile, "Tabby's Kittens", 1892 Medium cotton technique, printed by engraved roller on plain weave. Gift of Harvey Smith. **1964-55-3**
This object is part of **Textiles** collection.

SORT BY

- Relevance
- Accession Number
- Year Acquired
- Decade
- Image Complexity (Beta)
- Width
- Height
- Depth
- Longest Side Length
- Shortest Side Length

RESULT CATEGORY

Objects (6 results)

GEOGRAPHY

- United States (4 results)
- Austria (1 results)
- United Kingdom (1 results)

MUSEUM DEPARTMENT

- Wallcoverings (2 results)
- Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design (1 results)
- Product Design and Decorative Arts (1 results)
- Textiles (1 results)

MEDIA

- machine-printed on paper (1 results)
- painted brass (1 results)
- engraved copper rollers on paper (1 results)
- cotton (1 results)
- machine-printed (1 results)
- graphite on dark cream paper (1 results)

TYPES

- Sidewall (2 results)
- Figure (1 results)
- Border (1 results)
- textile (1 results)

WIDTH

- 0-6 (1 results)
- 10-50 (2 results)
- 80-100 (2 results)

a colophon for bias





This object hasn't been digitized yet.

Drawing, 1938-88-6726 / This object's accession number is 1938-88-6726 / This is from the **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** department / This object was here in **July 2001**.



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Drawing, 1938-88-6727 / This object's accession number is 1938-88-6727 / This is from the **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** department / This object was here in **July 2001**.



This object hasn't been digitized yet.

Drawing, 1938-88-3662 / This object's accession number is 1938-88-3662 / This is from the **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** department / This object was here in **July 2001**.



Drawing, "Study of a foal after Leonardo da Vinci, ca. 1500-55 / This object's accession number is 1938-57-911 and is dated ca. 1500-25 (**Renascence**) / This is from the **Drawing, Prints, and Graphic Design** department / This object was here in **July 2001**.



This object hasn't been digitized yet.

Drawing, 1901-39-2333 / This object's accession number is 1901-39-2333 / This is from the **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** department / This object was here in **July 2001**.



This object hasn't been digitized yet.

Drawing, 1901-39-2216 / This object's accession number is 1901-39-2216 / This is from the **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** department / This object was here in **July 2001**.



[colors](#) [countries](#) [departments](#) [exhibitions](#) [people](#) [periods](#) [random](#) [roles](#) [types](#) **this is a public alpha**

National Design Triennial: Why Design Now?

This exhibition was on display from May 14, 2010 to January 09, 2011 / [View results as a list](#)

There were 338 objects in this exhibition but right now we can only show you 7 of them. There were 128 different kinds of objects in this exhibition. Here are the top 15: (55 objects) - [Phototype](#) (14 objects) - [Video](#) (13 objects) - [model](#) (11 objects) - [textile graphics panel](#) (10 objects) - [Graphic textile panel](#) (10 objects) - [Original sketch](#) (8 objects) - [textile](#) (8 objects) - [Image](#) (8 objects) - [Woolen Lintel](#) (8 objects) - [magazine](#) (4 objects) - [painting](#) (4 objects) - [textile graphics panel](#) (4 objects) - [dress](#) (3 objects) - [Concept Model](#) (3 objects)



Textile, "Velvet", 2007-08 / This object's accession number is 2011-42-1 and is dated 2007-08 / This is from the [Textiles](#) department / We have 2 images of this object



Textile, "Tutu Crisscross", 2009 / This object's accession number is 2009-42-2 and is dated 2009 / This is from the [Textiles](#) department / We have 2 images of this object



Textile, "Koban Bunkashu", 2009 / This object's accession number is 2009-42-2 and is dated 2009 / This is from the [Textiles](#) department / We have 2 images of this object



We should have an image for this object.

early Modern | Periods | Collection of Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum

Go to a Website

pinboard reception HORN random instapaper tumblr collectionsB&P lastBill SVG Crowbar

early Modern | Periods

There are 312 objects for this period and this is page 1 of 13 / [View all 312](#)



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Drawing, "Metaphor 21 (Floor Plan)" 1960s / This object's accession number is 2009-20-8 and it is dated 1960s / This is from the [Drawing, Photo, and Graphic Design](#) department

Drawing, "Metaphor 21 (Floor Plan)" 1960s / This object's accession number is 2009-20-8 and it is dated 1960s / This is from the [Drawing, Photo, and Graphic Design](#) department

Drawing, "Metaphor 21 (Floor Plan)" 1960s / This object's accession number is 2009-20-7 and it is dated 1960s / This is from the [Drawing, Photo, and Graphic Design](#) department



This object has been digitized yet.



This object has been digitized but we can't show it to you yet.



This object has been digitized yet.

<http://cprhw.tv/pr/48wfm/>

This drawing is black pen and graphite on graph paper. Its dimensions are: 29.6 x 20.9 cm (11 5/8 x 8 1/4 in.).

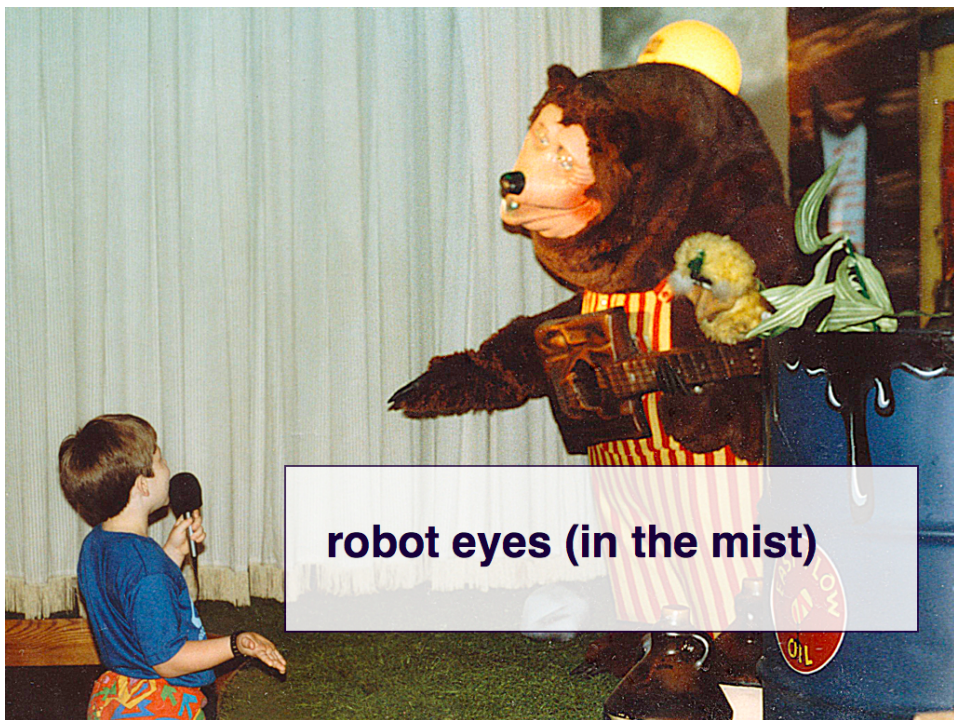
has been included in the following exhibitions: *Design Life*

practices of the indigenous people of South America, the Wichi, who live primarily in Formosa, an isolated area in northern Argentina. Originally settling near the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers,

dress is from **Argentina** and dated "2009"

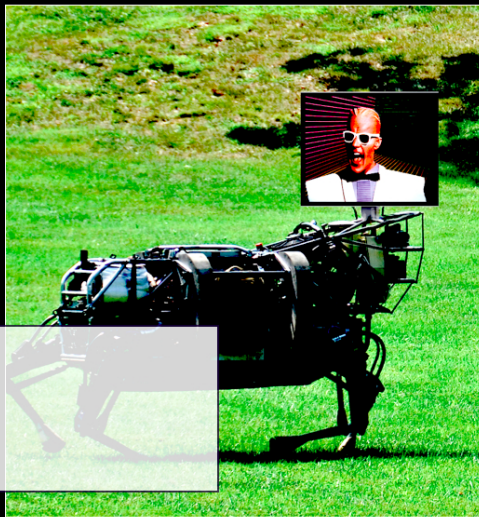
This textile is from Japan and dated "1987"

Website: <http://www.museum.kit.edu>

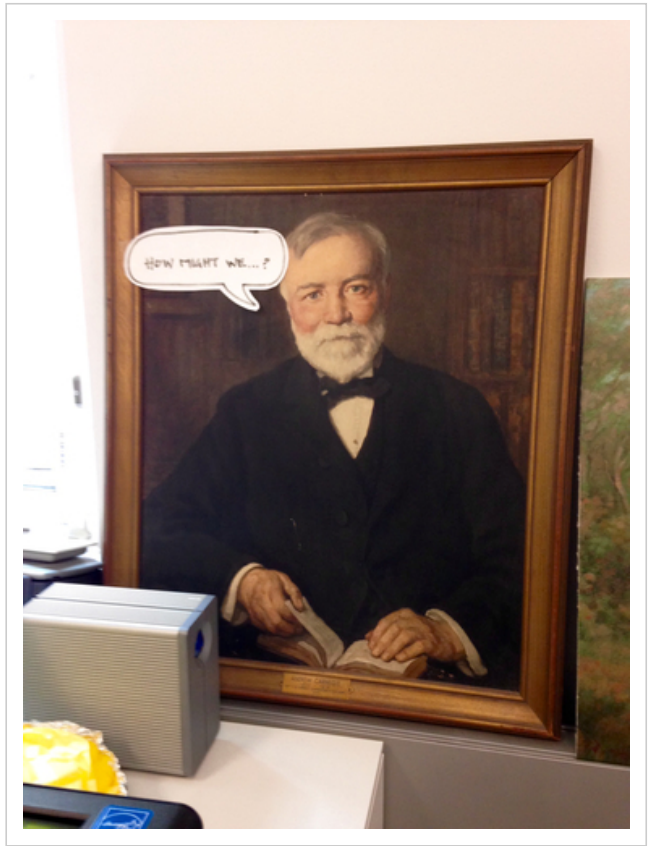


robot eyes (in the mist)

thank you



2014-09-12



**it's just desire pirates all the way
down / isn't it**

upload.js

"upload.js"

The day after **dConstruct** <http://2014.dconstruct.org/> , this year, the third **IndieWebCampUK** <http://indiewebcamp.com/2014/UK> event was held at the **Clearleft** <http://clearleft.com/> offices in Brighton. I only managed to make it to the tail end of the first day, having taken all of that morning and most of that afternoon to nurse a hangover and spend time with friends who I had not seen in a long time.

As luck would have it I arrived in time for **Jeremy** <http://adactio.com/journal/7434> to lead a session on photos. During the conversation he touched on the fact that web browsers on modern phones and tablets will trigger the camera when a user invokes the `<input type="file" />` element. This is how things like **oh yeah,** **that** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/03/15/ephemera/#ohyeahth> at work and I mentioned that I've been thinking about tweaking the code that does the actual uploading of a file to first write the data to browser's local cache, or storage, and then transfer the file in the background.

This is useful because it offers a fail-safe for uploads that don't succeed, typically because a network connection times out. That kind of failure is simply inconvenient if you're uploading photos from the phone's gallery but actually a problem if you've uploading directly from the camera because (at least under iOS) copies of the photo are not written to disk so anything but success means those photos vanish in to thin air. I think the cool kids call this "ephemeral". It also allows you do **Instagram-style** **trickery** <https://speakerdeck.com/mikeyk/secrets-to-lightning-fast-mobile-design> by telling the user that something has been uploaded much faster than it has because... well, it hasn't been yet.

I've been trying some of these approaches with projects like **dogeared** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/05/12/non/#dogeare>

d using the browser's **localStorage**

APIs <http://diveintohtml5.info/storage.html> and it all works fine except that, again under iOS at least, there is a hard cap on the amount of data you can cache and it turns out it doesn't take long to reach that limit when you're saving the full text of large PDF documents to your phone. I mentioned all of this to **Dietrich Ayala** <http://metafluff.com/> the other day pointing out that the problem with my clever plan for pre-caching photos is that you'd only be able to store one or two photos before the whole thing failed.

"Use **localForage**

instead <http://mozilla.github.io/localForage/> ", he said. It wraps all of the various storage APIs across platforms and in particular the ones that have a size limit that can expand and contract as needed. It's also asynchronous so reading and writing to disk won't block the execution of the main UI.

I sat down last night and decided to spend some time trying to make it work. I didn't have high hopes of getting anything working on the first pass but then a funny thing happened: It worked!

What follows is a step-by-step annotation of the code I wrote. It's not the most elegant code and I'm sure there's lots of room for improvement but it works, for me at least. I've also included a copy of the **raw source code** **here** </weblo/2014/09/22/desire/upload.js> and as a **gist on the GitHub** <https://gist.github.com/straup/0ee19019afd88c6dbd2d> if anyone would like to submit patches or gentle cluebats.

This is the basic setup. Here we define a callback for when the `<form>` element with ID `upload-form` is submitted. Once invoked we grab the upload which is returned as a **File** <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/API/File> thing-y. *Careful readers will note the use of*

jQuery <http://www.jquery.com/> . *There is nothing jQuery-specific about any of this but I haven't gotten around to generalizing it out of the code.*

```
function upload_init(){
    $("#upload-form").submit(function(){           // hello, jQuery
        try {
            var photos = $("#photo");
            var files = photos[0].files;
            var file = files[0];
```

This is the important bit. This is where we take the data in the upload and convert it to a **data URI** https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/HTTP/data_URIs and store it to the cache. We create a unique key for the upload using a hash of the current time and then invoke the **localforage.setItem** <http://mozilla.github.io/localForage/#setItem> command. Well, actually all we're doing is defining something to happen once the the File thing-y (the upload) has been read (as a DataURL) by the **FileReader** <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/API/FileReader> . Because... computers. Just go with it.

```
        var reader = new FileReader();
        reader.onload = function(evt){
            var data_uri = evt.target.result;
            var dt = new Date();
            var pending_id = window.btoa(dt.toISOString());
            var key = "upload_" + pending_id;
            localforage.setItem(key, data_uri, function(rsp){
                upload_process_pending(pending_id);
            });
        };
        reader.readAsDataURL(file)
    }
}
```

This is just a bunch of boring but necessary code to trap any errors that might occur above.

```
        catch(e){
            console.log("Hrm, there was a problem uploading your photo.", e);
            return false;
        }
        return false;
    });
```

See this? Note that we are still inside the `upload_init()` function.

Before we exit we're going to first clear any "I am processing an upload" flags and set up a timer to watch for anything new that's been added to the cache and needs to be processed.

```
upload_clear_processing();
setInterval(upload_process_pending, 60000); // adjust to taste
}
```

We are finally done with the `upload_init()` function and the following are two helper functions to iterate over all the **localStorage keys** <http://mozilla.github.io/LocalStorage/#keys> looking specific patterns and performing a corresponding action: Delete anything starting with `processing_` or pass anything starting with `upload_` to the `upload_process_pending_id()` function, below.

```
function upload_clear_processing(){
  var re = /processing_(.*)/;
  localStorage.keys(function(rsp){
    var count = rsp.length;
    for (var i=0; i < count; i++){
      var m = rsp[i].match(re);
      if (m){
        localStorage.removeItem(m[0], function(){
          console.log("unset " + m[0]);
        });
      }
    }
  });
}

function upload_process_pending(){
  var re = /upload_(.*)/;
  localStorage.keys(function(rsp){
    var count = rsp.length;
    for (var i=0; i < count; i++){
      var m = rsp[i].match(re);
      if (m){
        console.log("process pending id " + m[1]);
        upload_process_pending_id(m[1]);
      }
    }
  });
}
```

This is where we start uploading files. Almost.

```
function upload_process_pending_id(pending_id){
  var processing_key = "processing_" + pending_id;
  var upload_key = "upload_" + pending_id;
  console.log("process id: " + processing_key);
  console.log("process id: " + upload_key);
}
```

The first thing we do is check to see whether the current ID/key is in the process of being uploaded. If it is we can move on to other things. Because `localStorage` is asynchronous, however, we have to nest that logic inside of a callback to the

localStorage.getItem <http://mozilla.github.io/LocalStorage/#getItem> command.

```
localStorage.getItem(processing_key, function(rsp){
  if (rsp){
    console.log("got processing key, so skipping");
    return;
  }
});
```

It gets better. If we've gotten this far we've established that no one else is processing the current ID/key so the next thing we need to do is set a flag indicating that *we are*. Which, like everything else, has to happen asynchronously. You can see where this is going, right?

```
var dt = new Date();
var ts = dt.getTime();
localStorage.setItem(processing_key, ts, function(rsp){
  console.log("set " + processing_key + ", to " + ts);
});
```

Once that's done, we need to retrieve the cached data for the current ID/key and now we have callbacks to `localStorage` commands nested three deep...

```
localStorage.getItem(upload_key, function(data_uri){
  console.log("got data uri for " + upload_key);
});
```

But whatever, it works. So now we need to convert the cached data URI back in to a `File` thing-y or, more specifically... a

Blob <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/API/Blob> .

Honestly, I don't understand either. I'm willing to believe that it's all internally consistent technically but the documentation remains a bit lacking. Anyway, either it works and we hand everything off to the `upload_do_upload()` function or we remove the `processing_` flag on the key and hope that it will simply work the next time its invoked. *This is not ideal but you get the idea.*

*Also: I've not included the code to **convert a data URI to a Blob***

object <http://stackoverflow.com/questions/4998908/convert-data-uri-to-file-then-append-to-formdata> *in this blog post but it is included with a copy of the source code* </weblo/2014/09/22/desire/upload.js> .

```
try {
    var blob = upload_data_uri_to_blob(data_uri);
}
catch(e){
    console.log("failed to create a blob for " + upload_key + ", because " + e);
    localStorage.removeItem(processing_key, function(){});
    return false;
}
upload_do_upload(blob, pending_id);
```

Close all the callbacks because... Original Sin?

```
    });
  });
});
}
```

This is where the damn photo is *finally* uploaded. There's nothing fancy going on here beyond using a

FormData [https://developer.mozilla.org/en-](https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/API/FormData)

[US/docs/Web/API/FormData](https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/API/FormData) thing-y to store form data because it will take care of all the annoying details of actually sending the file across the wire.

```
function upload_do_upload(file, pending_id){
    console.log("do upload for " + pending_id);
    var data = new FormData();
    data.append('photo', file);
```

These are the usual **success** and **error** handlers for the upload request. The relevant bits are where we remove stuff from the localForage cache depending on the state of things.

```
var on_success = function(rsp){
    console.log(rsp);
    var processing_key = "upload_" + pending_id;
    var upload_key = "upload_" + pending_id;
    localStorage.removeItem(upload_key, function(rsp){
        console.log("removed " + upload_key);
        localStorage.removeItem(processing_key, function(rsp){
            console.log("removed " + processing_key);
        });
    });
};
```



```

    });
};
var on_error = function(rsp){
    console.log(rsp);
    var processing_key = "processing_" + pending_id;
    localStorage.removeItem(processing_key, function(rsp){
        console.log("removed " + processing_key);
    });
};
};

```

Now we send the file to the server. The details of this part, including any authorization or authentication tokens that should be appended to the form, are left as an exercise for the reader. *Note the use of the **jQuery***

ajax() <http://api.jquery.com/category/ajax/> function. Again, there's nothing jQuery-specific about any of this. It's just what I use because it's convenient.

```

$.ajax({
    url: 'http://upload.example.com/', // adjust to taste
    type: "POST",
    data: data,
    cache: false,
    contentType: false,
    processData: false,
    dataType: "json",
    success: on_success,
    error: on_error,
});
return false;
}

```

It's all still early days and I've not done any real stress-testing of this out in the wild but it suggests that it's possible to build a working on-and-offline **network-enabled camera** <http://powazek.com/posts/3416> as a plain-vanilla web application. The offline part is still a few steps away, in reality, because of genuinely boring and finicky details that have to do with security and caching but it feels like a problem that can be solved for with a little bit of patience.

I find this exciting. Update: ~~Meanwhile, this...~~ So this eventually got fixed in iOS 8.0.2 but I am going to leave the screenshot for the record...

oh yeah, that

choose

You have uploaded **1 of 20** possible photos today.

Heads up: If you are using or planning to switch to iOS 8 be aware that it **totally breaks uploads from the web browser**. The nice people at Apple are aware of this but "can not comment on a timeline" for a fix. Officials declined to comment on reports that we have always been at war with HTML...

upload photos account sign out





interpretation roomba

little buddy / robot eyes

this is my brick / there are many like it but...

little buddy / robot eyes



thisisaaronland

@thisisaaronland

thanks for this @adamhrv and @bruces ...

↩ Reply ★ Favorite ... More

Followed by Adam Harvey and Bruce Sterling.

Raytheon @Raytheon · Oct 6

This "little buddy" will take a bullet for you. Learn what it is (and more) here: raytheon.com/newsroom/featu...



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RETWEET

1

FAVORITES

4



8:48 AM - 10 Oct 2014

For the record. <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/520601653893144576>

2014-10-11

**this is my brick / there are
many like it but this one is
mine**



*Last week, I did a talk as part of Eyebeam's **LittleNets** <http://eyebeam.org/events/littlenets> exhibition, on New York City's **Governors Island** <http://www.govisland.com/> . It was a bit of a disjointed talk because it's still a conversation whose edges I am trying to feel out so what follows is something of a revisiting of a revisitation, so to speak. This was not an attempt to formulate a grand unified theory of "littlenets" but **to poke at the phenomena** http://revdancatt.com/2014/10/06/conference_eaters and see what poked back. There is, I believe, an audio recording of the talk for anyone who might choose to fact check what I really did and did not say at the time but as usual this is the story I want to remember.*

When **Ingrid Burrington** <http://lifewinning.com/> first approached me to participate in the LittleNets project I suggested, given the timing of the event, that perhaps I would try to revisit **the talk I was still working on for dConstruct** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/09/11/brand/#dconstruct> . In many ways the questions raised by "little" networks are the next step of the argument advanced during that talk. I didn't get to them when I was at **dConstruct** <http://2014.dconstruct.org/> so rather than reconsidering what I said in Brighton I'd like to pull on this thread and see where it goes.

What both talks share though is an attempt to acknowledge the very real, often very justified, **sense of gloom and anxiety** <https://twitter.com/jomc/status/518256116627959809> when we think about what the Network means in 2014 but to also indentify — and in some cases to *remember* — why it might still be important.

But first, some quotes and some unrelated stories to set the tone. The stories are like those people you haven't met but with whom you all share a common set of mutual friends. So while the stories themselves may seem disconnected I think that when you step back and look at them from a distance they often carry the same motivational velocity.

**“...to write history
without the play of
imagination is to dig in
an intellectual
graveyard.”**

– Simon Schama

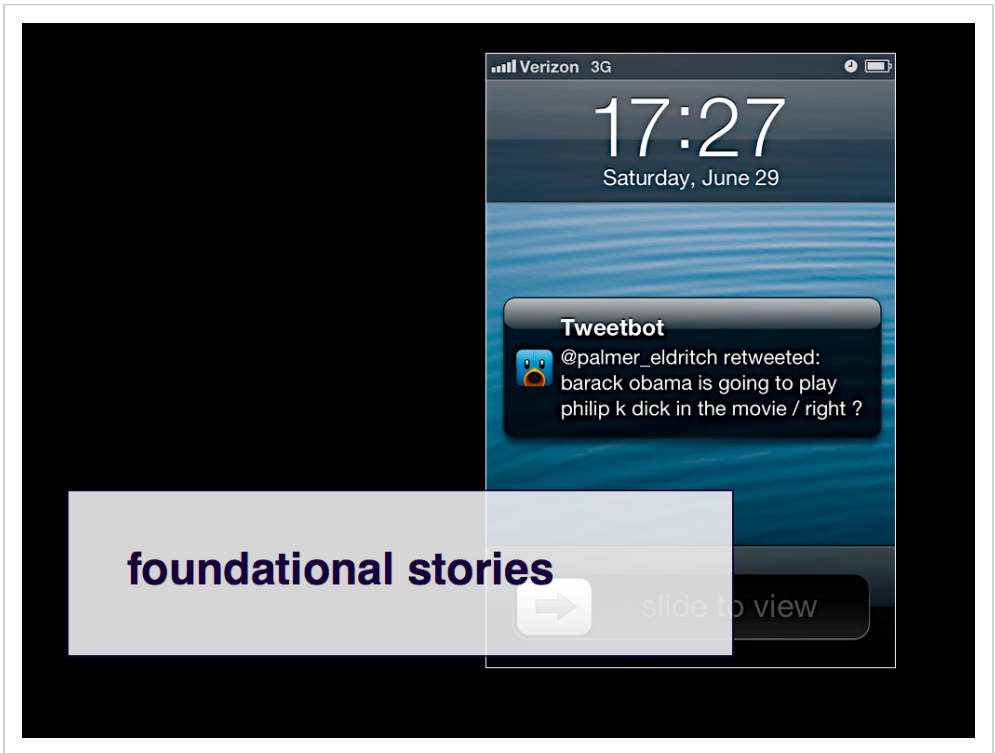
This is from the introduction to Simon Schama's "**Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizens:_A_Chronicle_of_the_French_Revolution". He is talking here about the choice to tell the story of the Revolution in the form of a narrative rather than a traditional historical survey.

It's a good book. You should read it. It's also a Very Big book but that just means it contains a whole lot of good book to read.

**“...to ask a question
and be told the answer
just doesn't exist.”**

– Joseph Fink

This is from **Joseph Fink** <http://commonplacebooks.com/> ,
one of the principals behind **Welcome to
Nightvale** <http://podbay.fm/show/536258179> . The quote is from **a
talk he did at XOXO this year** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?
v=nzsvuvcDrTc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nzsvuvcDrTc) and he was talking about the sense of frustration that
some of their audience feel when they are confronted with the creator's
decision to actively resist filling in the archetypal details of the various
characters. It turns out, this is not always something people are prepared
to hear.



I guess you need to be a science fiction

fan <http://www.thephilipkdickfilmfestival.com/> to enjoy the humour in this slide but it is pretty much my most favourite moment on Twitter ever.

Part of the reason these two quotes interest me is that I've been thinking a lot about origin stories and creation myths. I've been thinking about how we recognize and choose the imagery and narratives — the abstractions — that we use to re-tell a story. There's nothing a priori wrong with those choices. We have always privileged certain moments over others as vehicles for conveying the symbolism of an event.

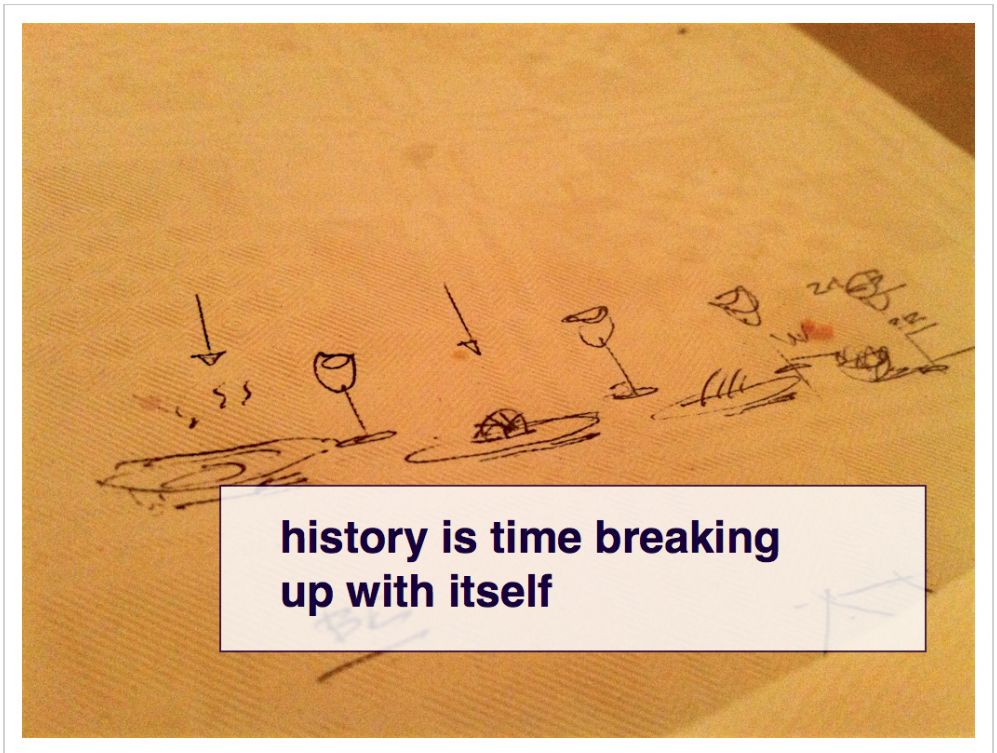
It's part of the reason that I have been dwelling on the brick in the title slide for this talk. If you're not already familiar with it that brick is on display in the South tower of the 9/11 Memorial, formerly the World Trade Center, across the water in Lower Manhattan. It's a brick that was recovered from **Osama bin Laden's compound in Abbottabad** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Osama_bin_Laden%27s_compound_in_Abbottabad . Really.

Talking about 9/11 remains complicated especially so in New York City where many people still aren't ready to revisit the event or, more specifically, the imagery from the day itself. What was interesting in visiting the 9/11 Memorial, which is heavily trafficked by tourists and out-of-towners, is that I came away feeling like people who *weren't* here in person are now *wanting*, maybe even needing, to revisit that same imagery. Images that were replayed endlessly in the days following 9/11 and then all but banished from public view afterwards.

There are a pair of seven or eight foot tall video loops of the towers falling on display at the 9/11 Memorial and the fact that visitors are taking "selfies" standing in front of them might suggest that we have finally plumbed the depths of craven sensationalism. Or it could be that in those two short sequences were captured the totality of an awareness that a threshold had been crossed. That whatever the story of 9/11 is in another seven hundred years in the seconds — *seconds* — that it took for the each tower to collapse in on itself was the sight of all the oxygen being sucked out of the room and replaced by the too many shades of bad craziness we've known in years that followed.

Maybe that is why people are drawn to the video loops. Maybe that is why almost no one I've spoken to has heard of or, if they've visited the 9/11 Memorial, seen the brick from Osama bin Laden's compound. It's right there hiding in plain sight but not many people notice it. Nor have I met anyone who hasn't been genuinely touched by the reflecting pools, the two outdoor waterfalls titled **Reflecting Absence** http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-rosenbaum/reflecting-absense-explor_b_894419.html , that occupy the footprints of the towers themselves. If the goal of the 9/11 Memorial is to convey to visitors the enormity and the scale of the impact of events that day perhaps that all that is needed are the reflecting pools and those two video loops?

It's a bit abstract, for sure, but so are all memorials. However, it is in the abstractions we choose that the foundational stories we tell ourselves and which serve as the fence-posts for the rest of our lives are found.



**history is time breaking
up with itself**

I've also been thinking about history as the space between the moments that come to define an event. History being the by-product of a sequence of events pulling apart from each, over time, leaving not just the peaks of a few dominant imagery but the many valleys of interpretation.

When I think of it this way I am always reminded of Scott McCloud's **Understanding**

Comics [http://www.scottmccloud.com/2-print/1-](http://www.scottmccloud.com/2-print/1-uc/index.html)

[uc/index.html](http://www.scottmccloud.com/2-print/1-uc/index.html) in which he celebrates "the magic in the gutter". The gutter being the space between frames where action is unseen and left to

imagination of the reader. These are the things I think of when I consider something like the 9/11 Memorial and the construction of a narrative around the event it commemorates.

Not much is left to abstraction and so it feels as though the memorial itself acts as a vacuum against interpretation, at all. It is a kind of "Interpretation Roomba" that moves through your experience of the venue sucking up any space in which you might be able to consider the event outside of the master narrative.



Perhaps the greatest narrative abstraction we've ever known is the one we call "shareholder value". I am fascinated by shareholder value because it feels like the closest we've come to **taming motive** <https://pinboard.in/u:straup/t:motive> . It is in fact the pure white-hot light of motive itself. There is no doubt in shareholder value and with that comes the affordance of confidence. The confidence to take motive for granted which opens up some pretty fertile terroitory it turns out. To argue that there is no doubt in shareholder value is *not* to argue that is absent of consequence.

The absence of any mitigating concerns in a shareholder value

driven corporation has, we've discovered, loosed particularly deviant forms of behaviour that we aren't entirely sure how to rein in anymore. The elegance of shareholder value, for me, is not in the results but simply the ability by which it has been able to wrestle a community of heterogeneous actors in a single direction which, after all, has been the burden and struggle of any body politic for as long as we've had communities and societies.

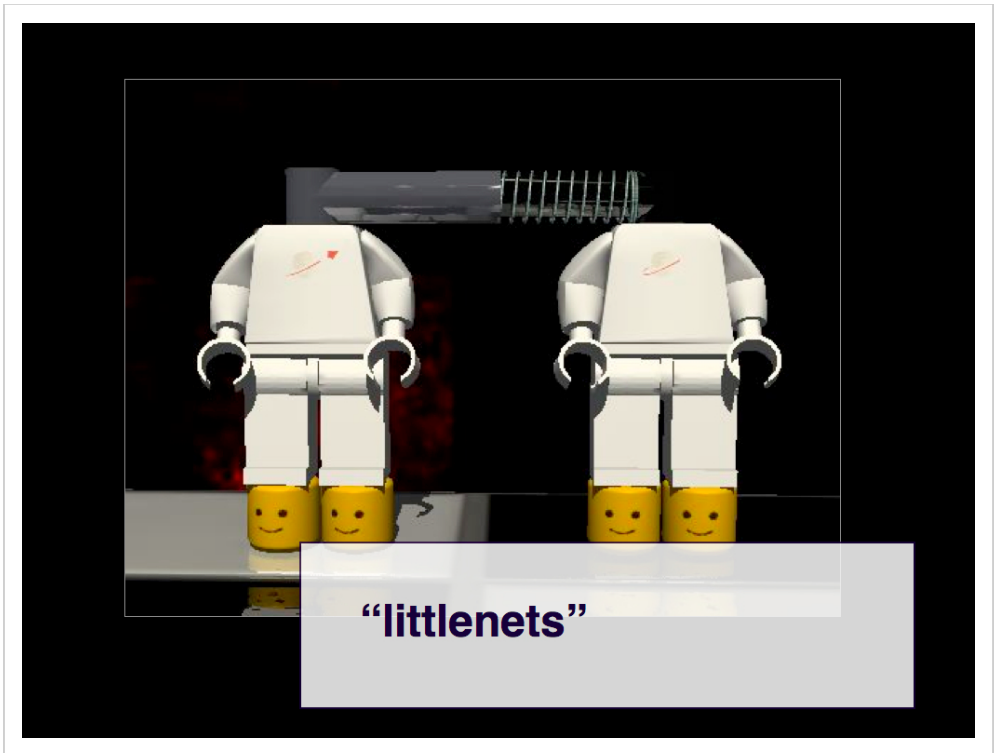
I work at a **design**

museum <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/> and one of the things that I would like for us to acquire *as a design object* is **the Benefit Corporation** <http://www.bcorporation.net/>, often known more simply as the "B-Corp". I'm still not sure what this means for a museum to collect, if we're getting down to brass tacks, but I am interested in the B-Corp precisely because of how it relates to that other designed object, shareholder value.

The B-Corp is still a for-profit entity with shareholder and fiduciary responsibilities but with the added purpose or responsibility of ensuring transparency and accountability in their workings and of achieving a "material positive impact" on society and the environment. These are not burdens placed on a company by the state or the community but undertaken by an enterprise itself. And yet it is still a for-profit (a shareholder value driven) corporation.

It is a particularly deft way of re-wiring the by-laws of an enterprise such that it torks that perfect crystalization of motive inherent in shareholder value just enough to reintroduce measures of ambiguity

— society and the environment, anyone? — in to how decisions are made and disputes are resolved.



A couple of years ago, in what may have been the opening thunderclap in a series of long, dark and stormy nights of 1990's nostalgia, the New Museum staged an exhibition titled **NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No**

Star <http://www.newmuseum.org/exhibitions/view/nyc-1993-experimental-jet-set-trash-and-no-star> . As part of the exhibition they hosted a lecture and panel titled **The Internet Before the Web: Preserving Early Networked**

Cultures <http://www.newmuseum.org/calendar/view/the-internet-before-the-web-preserving-early-networked-cultures> which was largely about the technologies and the communities that cut their teeth around **bulletin board**

systems <http://www.bbsdokumentary.com/> , or simply BBSes.

One of the panelists was an artist named Wolfgang Staehle who founded **The Thing**

BBS <http://www.theverge.com/2013/3/15/4104494/the-thing-reloaded-bringing-bbs-networks-back-from-the-dead> , in 1991. The Thing was notable for not simply being one of the first artist-run BBS' in New York City but also because it had multiple nodes, in a handful of European cities, and every night all of the messages would be synced between systems. One of the things he said that night, which seems sort of self-evident in hindsight but which struck a nerve with me at the time was, and I am paraphrasing: *"You know, before any of this all we had to communicate with each other was the postal service and the corresponding one to two week lag built in to every conversation. Now instead of two weeks it was one day and now instead of one individual forwarding something on to the next individual we could all read something and comment on it, by the standards of what existed before, at the same time."*

After the panel some of us went out for drinks and for people of a certain age it was difficult not to fall prey to moments sounding exactly like our parents and saying things like: *The kids today, they don't know what it was like back in the day when all we had were bulletin board systems...*

I mention this for a couple reasons.

The first is to ask the question: Is a slow network akin to no network at all? It is hard to imagine going back to the dial-up speeds of the 1990's Internet and I expect it would be a shock to someone who's never experienced them but I think we would all do well to keep Staehle's comments about the time to broadcast and the time to relay in mind.

The second is that as we were all sitting around the table waxing nostalgic about 28.8 Kbps modems I remember thinking: Actually, when I first discovered the web I *wanted* the next generation to be able to take this for granted. I wanted the "kids" to live in a world where the Internet was just part of the fabric of life, where it didn't need to be a **philosophical**

moment <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/01/17/sunmullet/#objects> everytime you got online.

The good news is that this has, by and large, happened. The bad news is we've forgotten why it was important in the first place and if it feels like the Network is governed by — and increasingly defined by — a kind of grim meathook fatalism I think maybe that's why.

Somewhere in all the excitement of the last 20 years we forgot, or at least neglected, the creation myth and the foundational story behind the Network and in doing so we have left open a kind of narrative vacuum. We have left the space — **the opportunity** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/09/11/brand/#dconstruct> — to say why the Network exists at all to those who would see it shaped in ways that are perhaps at odds with the very

reasons that made it special in the first place.



secret breakfast club

With that in mind I would like to suggest that "littlenets" have always been
relative <http://tinyletter.com/danhon/letters/episode-one-hundred-and-seventy-five-housekeeping-private-in-public-it-s-the-basics> . Consider:

- *Royal courts.*
- *The so-called **Republic of Letters** <http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/> , the community of 17th and 18th century intellectuals who*

communicated through that most primitive of

sneakernets <https://www.wordnik.com/words/sneaker>
net called hand-written letters.

- *Cafe societies and salons.*
- *New York City — because remember, before the Internet New York was genuinely the center of the Universe. You no longer have to be in Manhattan (or even Brooklyn) anymore to find the debate or just like-minded peoples and that is a reality the city has been struggling to deal with ever since.*
- *Bulletin board systems, newsgroups, **the recent resurgence of mailing lists*** <https://medium.com/message/tiny-letters-to-the-web-we-miss-6a695a6316c> .

So I think one of the questions we would do well to ask ourselves is: Is the idea of the "littlenet" simply coded language for a kind of secret breakfast club which in turn only exists relative to the exclusion of the biggernet? The issue here not being so much any particular network but rather the social and cultural forces that they are subject to and often warped by. Which raises another question: If "littlenets" have always acted as a kind of desire-trap, distinct from whatever their fundamental is-ness is, does our interest in them now point to a deeper concern?



being alone together

Little­nets are not one single thing but tend to be associated with a particular class of projects: Community wireless and by extension mesh networks. Community wireless projects inspire the same question in me everytime: Why are they always portal pages? I mean really, why? If the chat features built in to the seatback-entertainment systems on airplanes were ever used then I might be able to make sense of it but since they're not I continue to fail to understand why we build these genuinely well-meaning projects in the *service* of a community along the same lines.

I knew some of the people involved in **Île Sans**

Fil <http://www.ilesansfil.org/> (ISF) an early community-based project to provide wireless access points in Montreal. ISF was and remains awesome and I continue to support the *idea* of using the notional common space — the neighbourhood or the coffee shop itself or at least the **captive portal** <https://github.com/wifidog> login page everyone had to sign in through — to share local news and promote local events. But I never once used it and I don't know anyone who ever has.

I certainly never used it to introduce myself to someone else who was sitting on the other side of the room. Maybe some people did it always felt a bit proscriptive to think I would do something in a public space *where I had never done it before* just because some of us happened to be online. I love that the Network gave cause for people who might otherwise have never met **to come together every month for 10 years** <http://yulblog.org/index-en.html> but we did it at our own pace.

But it's a bit weird when getting online becomes an activity which becomes an obligation which becomes a ritual. I am pretty sure the reason the Network was so exciting in the first place was that it was none of these things.



*For those of you not versed in Star Trek history this is a still from the first episode to feature the "holodeck". In this scene Data and Riker stand at **the pixelated edge of the world** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_Earth having just discovered that the **New Aesthetic** <http://new-aesthetic.tumblr.com/> lies on the other side.*

Another question I've been asking myself as I've been thinking about this talk is: Does a littlenet simply transit data or does it terminate that same data? Is a littlenet specific to a place? Are littlenets defined by the effort it takes to get there? That seems a bit weird and almost

antithetical to the idea of the Network, right?

Maybe not though or maybe it's less about littlenets acting like destinations or encouraging a particular set of rituals but instead simply taking advantage of the properties the Network offers to provide bespoke services. For example, what if bars ran captive portal networks that you couldn't get out of, like Dan Phiffer's

Occupy.here <http://www.occupyhere.org/> , but all they did was offer **access to a dictionary** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_sQjc3KFuAQ ?

...it's just not notationally anywhere near so convenient. I mean, it's sort of loosely analogous to working with Roman numerals instead of Arabic numerals. It's not that you can't do arithmetic, it's just a bitch. Much more difficult, perhaps, and therefore mentally...more constraining.

— **Brian**

Kernighan <https://www.princeton.edu/~hos/frs122/unixhist/finalhis.htm>

*I did not include this quote by Brian Kernighan in the original talk. If I had I might have put it just before **Joseph Fink's quote** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/10/06/interpretation/#eyebeam-003> . This feels like a nice place to put it for posterity.*

That might seem like an absurd example at first but let it sink in for a minute or two and if you're like me you'll find yourself thinking that would be kind of awesome. A dictionary in a bar is a polite of saying *We're here to foster the conversation on your own terms rather than dictate it on ours.*

A dictionary in a bar would be a "service" in the... well, in the service of the thing that bars don't need *any* help with: conversation, socializing, play. People aren't going to stop frequenting bars that they don't have dictionaries in them, but a bar with a dictionary in it would be that much better.

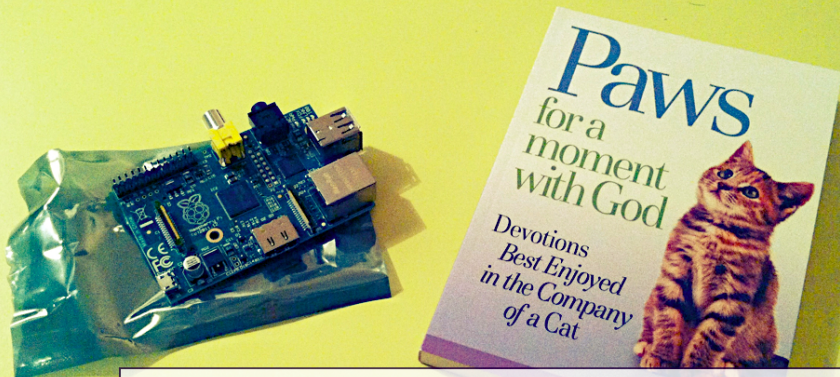


If a littlenet does not terminate then does it or should it engage in traffic shaping? What separates a littlenet from a **fake cell phone tower** https://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2014/09/fake_cell_phone.html ? What about **deep packet inspection** <https://epic.org/privacy/dpi/> (DPI) ? What about **goatse** <http://boingboing.net/2006/09/12/goatse-fights-for-vo.html> ? If a littlenet does not drink the **common carrier** <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/47/chapter-5/subchapter-II/part-Ixs> Kool-Aid is it still a Network or just gated-community for like minded participants?

None of these problems go away just because a network is little and it is their little-ness and their potential ubiquity that exasperates these problems. It casts the questions around an infrastructure of trust as much as an infrastructure of reach in to relief.

We have historically relied on the scarcity and the difficulty of access to the tools that can manipulate the Network at... **the network layer** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OSI_model as a way to manage those questions of trust. Ultimately, littenets force those larger issues of how we organize (and by definition **how we limit** <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-46/page-157.html#h-92>) ourselves as a community to the fore. It speaks to the question of public institutions and their mandates. **It speaks to the question of philosophy trumping engineering.** <http://killscreeendaily.com/articles/how-to-make-1500-year-old-game-interesting-again/>

It speaks to the question of how we articulate an idea of the Network and why we believe it is important and what we do to preserve those qualities.



defending infrastructure

Imagine if we all went home after this talk to discover that NSA had, as a public service, started doing DPI and filtering to block **Shellshock**

attacks <http://www.dwheeler.com/essays/shellshock.html> at the network layer? That they were doing this in the name of public safety. Given the potential severity of the bug and its consequences it's difficult to reject the proposition out of hand. That would be an awkward moment for a lot of people because that is **the very same technology** <http://www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/oct/25/citizenfour-denouncing-surveillance/> we've been worried will be used as a means of control and coercion.

Because this isn't about the technology, per se, but the intellectual and social models in which those tools are deployed. The

Fourth

Amendment [http://scholarship.law.gwu.edu/do/search/?q=author_lname%3A%22Solove%22%20author_fname%3A%22Daniel%22&start=0&context=2491491](http://scholarship.law.gwu.edu/do/search?q=author_lname%3A%22Solove%22%20author_fname%3A%22Daniel%22&start=0&context=2491491) of the US Constitution doesn't try to solve for deviant behaviour on the part of the authorities but rather re-frames or safeguards the question as one of *admissibility*. Something may in fact — like real-life-fact — have happened but if the collection of that proof violates the rights enjoyed under the Fourth Amendment then *it doesn't count*.

That doesn't mean it's always clear-cut. At the moment there are at least two Fourth Amendment decisions that would appear to be at odds with one another. In **US v.**

Jones <http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/10-1259.pdf> the Supreme Court ruled that the police could not simply place a GPS-tracking device on a person's car and follow them around. On the other the various circuit courts can't seem to decide **whether historical cell-tower location data should enjoy the same**

protections <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/06/11/eleveth-circuit-disagreeing-with-the-fifth-holds-fourth-amendment-protects-cell-site-records/> . Personally I don't really see how you can argue the former and not the latter. More importantly though is that in both cases the issue is the merit and the persuasiveness of the argument and **the fact that we argue about it**

all <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh->

conspiracy/wp/2014/09/22/apples-dangerous-game-part-3-where-do-you-draw-the-line-and-whats-the-privacy-tradeoff/ rather than simply submitting to a technological inevitability.

Which isn't to say that a certain amount of technological inevitability isn't a real thing. We have a hard enough time managing, containing and adjusting the impact and opportunities of new technologies inside the hula-hoop of a single society. It is often harder to defend the social contracts we forge for ourselves from ourselves than from outsiders, real or perceived. In a networked world suddenly that same dynamic can be played out with everyone, where everyone means every conflict ever recorded from tribes to nation states, and without the comforting illusion of a geographic burden borne by others, to protect us.

For a properly depressing time everyone should read the work of **Dan Geer** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Geer . His writing is especially depressing because he makes some pretty cogent arguments in the service of equally sour conclusions: That **the Internet is fundamentally incompatible with critical infrastructure** <http://geer.tinho.net/geer.sourceboston.18iv12.txt> and that at the end of the day **cybersecurity is akin to Realpolitik** <http://geer.tinho.net/geer.rsa.28ii14.txt> . I've included the links to a pair of especially relevant essays below. I mention them here because it's a discussion that you should be aware of if you're thinking about littlenets and because it advances an unnervingly just-that-side-of-possible narrative for a particularly awful kind of Network Darwinianism.

Let's play pretend for a moment and consider the actions of a company like Google these last few years in that light. Google is **laying its own fiber network** <https://fiber.google.com/> (like going out in the world and digging trenches and stuff) at the same time it is taking to the skies (with **drones** <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/08/inside-googles-secret-drone-delivery-program/379306/> and **balloons** <http://www.google.com/loon/> and even **satellites** <http://www.skyboximaging.com/blog/skybox-imaging-google>) at the same time it is buying **all the robotics companies** <http://spectrum.ieee.org/autaton/robotics/industrial-robots/google-acquisition-seven-robotics-companies> most notably Boston Dynamics, whose superpower seems to be an ability to mine **the creepiest regions of the robotic uncanny valley** <https://twitter.com/darpaatlasrobot> .

It would be easy to joke that Google bought Boston Dynamics so they can send **BIGDOG** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BigDog#mediaviewer/File:Big_dog_military_robots.jpg units to **to defend their underwater cables from sharks** <http://www.forbes.com/sites/amitchowdhry/2014/08/15/how-google-stops-sharks-from-eating-undersea-cables/> but if you replace sharks with a competitor or even **a nation-state** <https://plus.google.com/app/basic/stream/z124x11hspmjhdmno22kxxsonpe3dnelg> then, taken as a whole, Geer's tracing of **Realpolitik-shaped shadows**

spy-programs-may-break-internet-reformed-google-leader-
says/ behind everyone's actions start to seem hauntingly plausible.

http://shlong.us/yb

<http://geer.tinho.net/geer.sourceboston.18iv12.txt>

http://shlong.us/1j6

<http://geer.tinho.net/geer.rsa.28ii14.txt>

what would BIGDOG do?

Here are the links to the two essays by Dan Geer I mentioned:

- *Criticality, Rejectionists, Risk*

Tolerance <http://geer.tinho.net/geer.sourceboston.18iv12.txt>

- *We Are All Intelligence Officers*

Now <http://geer.tinho.net/geer.rsa.28ii14.txt>

Sad face.



a narrative climate

But in the end we also decided that Realpolitik was a bit shit.

About all it got us was the First World War and we are still picking up the pieces from that mess. Here is another fiction we might entertain. It is not fully formed and lacking enough details that I could justifiably be accused of suffering from why-can't-we-be-nice-to-each-other-ism but think of this more as an attempt to give the conversation a narrative arc rather than a proposal for a concrete solution.

It goes like this: *If we liken the network to weather what does it mean to think of its climate as too hostile for any one person to survive*

in isolation? What would that mean, really? I have no idea and I recognize that this is one line of argument in support of **a benevolent all-seeing surveillance**

state <http://modelviewculture.com/issues/surveillance> but perhaps there are parallels to be found in the way that cold-weather countries organize themselves relative to the reality of winter.

Regardless of your political stripes in those countries there is common cause in not letting people face those months alone to die of exposure.

I really don't know how or whether this translates to the Network in part because it's not clear to me whether the problem is not having access to the Network, not having unfettered access to the Network (think of those Facebook-subsidized and Facebook-only data plans for mobile phones) or that the Network itself, left unchecked, is in fact a pit of vipers.

Should the state suspend reality in the service of a mandate for the Network the way that they sometimes do for universal health care or, if you live in the US, the highway system? Is that just what we now call **network neutrality** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpbOEoRrHyU>

or should we do more to temper the consequences of assuming the Network is inherently hostile? To actively foster more communitarian sensibilities and safeguards?

You're not supposed to say this out loud, particularly in light of events like **the Snowden**

revelations <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2014/10/02/the-nsa-and-me/>, but the reality is societies announce that $2+2=5$

because "reasons" all the time.



The day I arrived in Brighton for dConstruct, the Improving Reality conference was being held. The theme this year was **Visibility is a Trap** <http://www.lighthouse.org.uk/programme/improving-reality-2014-visibility-is-a-trap> . I was unable to attend because I needed to finish preparing for my talk before jetlag got the better of me. By all accounts the event was excellent and I regret not being able to attend because the idea that visibility is a "trap" makes me bristle.

It's not that I don't understand why someone might say that, these days. Nor would I advocate for the kind of radical transparency

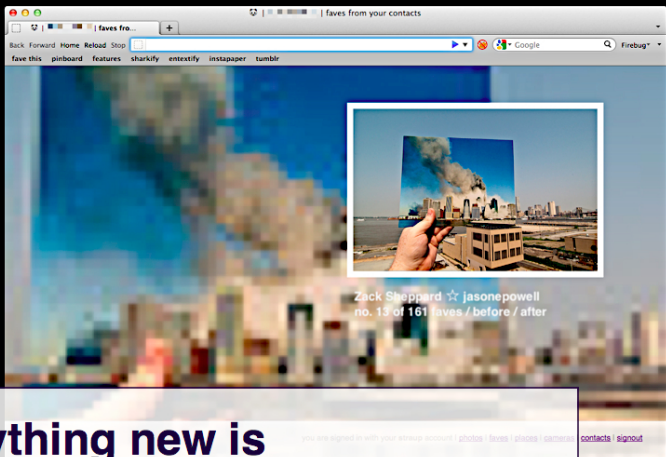
that some people do, although there's a discussion to be had about where that idea stops being bad for institutions and starts to be detrimental for individuals because I think we often play fast and loose with those distinctions.

My issue is that we have spent a good deal of the last 500 years (give or take) trying to make visibility a legitimate concern. We have spent a lot of time and lot of effort arguing that there is a space for voices outside the dominant culture and to now choose to retreat in to invisibility, as a tactic, seems counter-productive at best and fitting the needs of people who were never really down the project at worst.

The only reason many of know each other is because we were willing, because we desired, to stick our head above the parapet of the Network and say "I am here". Acting in public remains

complicated <http://seriouspony.com/trouble-at-the-koolaid-point> and is still **decidedly**

unfair <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah8mhDW6Shs> for many but if the creation myth of visibility is one of malice-by-default then we might have a bigger problem on our hands.



everything new is
samizdat again

During the Cold War people in Soviet-controlled countries used to read and distribute banned publications as so-called "samizdat". This is what Wikipedia has to say about

samizdat <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samizdat> :

Samizdat distinguishes itself not only by the ideas and debates which it helped spread to a wider audience, but also by its physical form. The hand-typed, often blurry and wrinkled pages which possessed numerous typos and nondescript covers helped to separate and elevate Russian samizdat from Western literature. Though the physical form of samizdat grew out of the simple lack of resources and necessity of inconspicuousness, dissidents in the USSR began to fetishize samizdat for the sharp contrast between samizdat's ragged appearance and the appearance of texts published by the state. The form of samizdat itself took precedence over the ideas expressed in it, and came to symbolize the resourcefulness and rebellious spirit of citizens of the Soviet Union. In effect, the physical form of samizdat itself elevated the reading of samizdat to a prized clandestine act

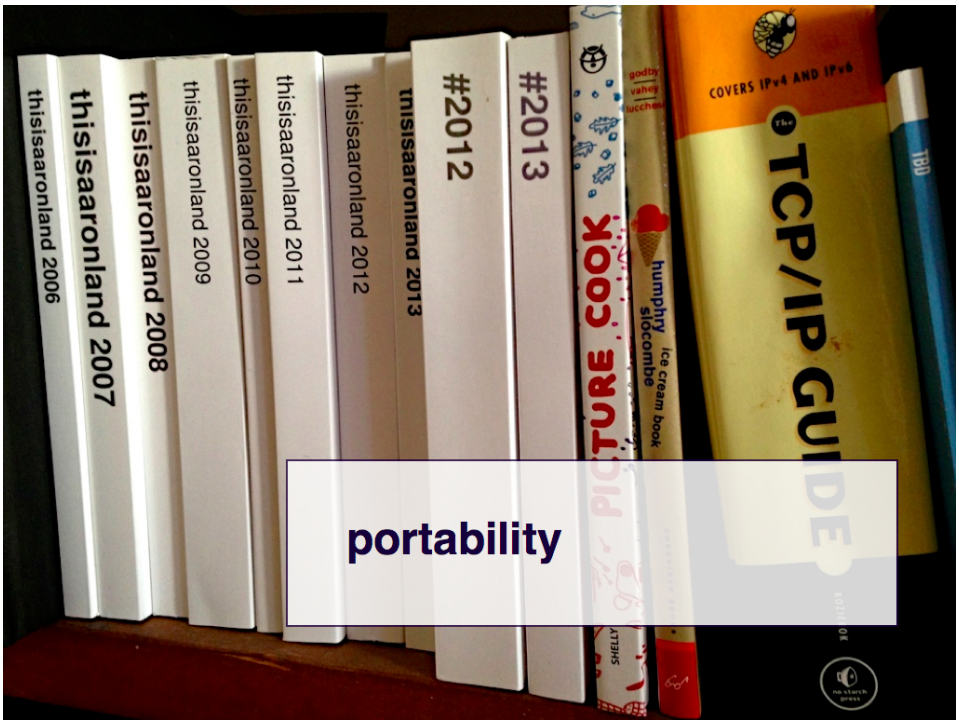
The question everyone is being forced to ask themselves these days is: What if the well has been poisoned?

Maybe not all the evidence but quite a lot of it would suggest that the Network is either suffering a tragedy of the Commons or that it's been co-opted by some kind of freakish Broadcast Nation Counter-Reformation or simply mob rule.

The reality is always more nuanced but let's use my hyperbole to imagine a worst case scenario — try to imagine the Internet going dark unannounced *tomorrow* — so that we might imagine what we do. Or

rather why its absence would prompt us to do anything at all.

The reason I quoted the Wikipedia entry on samizdat at length is because I think it's just as easy to fetishize the littlenet for its form and its counter-narrative at the expense of what it actually makes possible. To that end I have come to think of the idea of the "littlenet" as more of a conceptual device with which to think about a Network held hostage to Realpolitik.



The problem I have with littlenets is that I *want* to live in a world with a "biggernet" that doesn't make me sad or suspect or hate everyone around me. The concern I have with littlenets is that they offer a rhetorical bluff from which to avoid the larger social questions that a networked world lay bare. And that in avoiding those questions we orphan the reasons (the creation myths) why the Network seemed novel and important in the first place.

There's a meme which has been bubbling up more and more often these days, **advanced by people like**

Ingrid <https://twitter.com/search?>

q=library%20ISP%20from%3Aalifewinning&src=typd and others, that perhaps **libraries should operate as internet service providers** <http://www.thedigitalshift.com/2014/06/digital-divide/cpl-nypl-wifi-hotspot-lending-programs-funded-knight-foundation-grants/> . That the mandate of a publicly-minded institution like a library is best suited to a particular articulation of **the Network as a general-purpose possibility space** <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mbiddulph/3888509266/> .

Libraries lend books on the *principle* that access to information is value in and of itself not because they know what people will do with that knowledge. Libraries have also been some of the earliest adopters of **littlenets in the service of that same principle** <http://librarybox.us/> in the form of electronic distribution hubs. I bet some of those littlenets even have dictionaries on them.

*Update: Raffaele Messuti's blog post **a wayback machine (pywb) on a cheap, shared host** <http://literarymachin.es/pywb-wayback-machine/> is a really nice example of this idea.*

So, despite my reservations and in the interests of defaulting to action maybe we should all endeavour to run our own read-only littlenets of **stuff we think is worth preserving** <http://noisydecentgraphics.typepad.com/design/2009/01/things-our-friends-have-written-on-the-internet-2008-is-a-publication-thats-been-dropping-through-letter-boxes->

over-the-last.html and sharing. If the politics and the motives surrounding the Network are going to get all pear-shaped in the years to come then **maybe littlenets are our own samizdat** <https://medium.com/message/tilde-club-i-had-a-couple-drinks-and-woke-up-with-1-000-nerds-a8904f0a2ebf> and the means to save what came before and to say as much to ourselves as to others: *This is how it should be.*



thank you

2014-10-08



**Things I have written about
elsewhere #1414368000**

a colophon for bias

a colophon for bias

*This is a blog post that was **originally written for the Cooper Hewitt Labs blog** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/a-colophon-for-bias/> , and published on October 27, 2014.*

The term [colophon] derives from tablet inscriptions appended by a scribe to the end of a ... text such as a chapter, book, manuscript, or record. In the ancient Near East, scribes typically recorded information on clay tablets. The colophon usually contained facts relative to the text such as associated person(s) (e.g., the scribe, owner, or commissioner of the tablet), literary contents (e.g., a title, “catch” phrase, number of lines), and occasion or purpose of writing.

Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colophon_%28publishing%29

A couple of months ago we added the ability to **search the collections website by**

color <http://www.collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors> using **more than one**

palette <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/palettes/> .

A brief refresher: Our search by color functionality

works <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/giv-do/> by first extracting the dominant palette for an index. That means the top 5 colors out of a possible 32 million choices. 32 million is too large a surface area to search against so each of the five results are then “snapped” to their closest match on a much smaller grid of possible colors. These matches are then indexed and used to query our database when someone searches for objects matching a specific color.

It turns out that the **CSS3 color**

palette <https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/CSS> which defines a fixed set of 138 colors is an excellent choice for doing this sort of thing. CSS is the acronym for Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) which is a “language used to describe the presentation” of a webpage separate from its content. Instead of asking people searching the collections website to be hyper-specific in their queries we take the color they are searching for and look for the nearest match in the CSS palette.

For example:

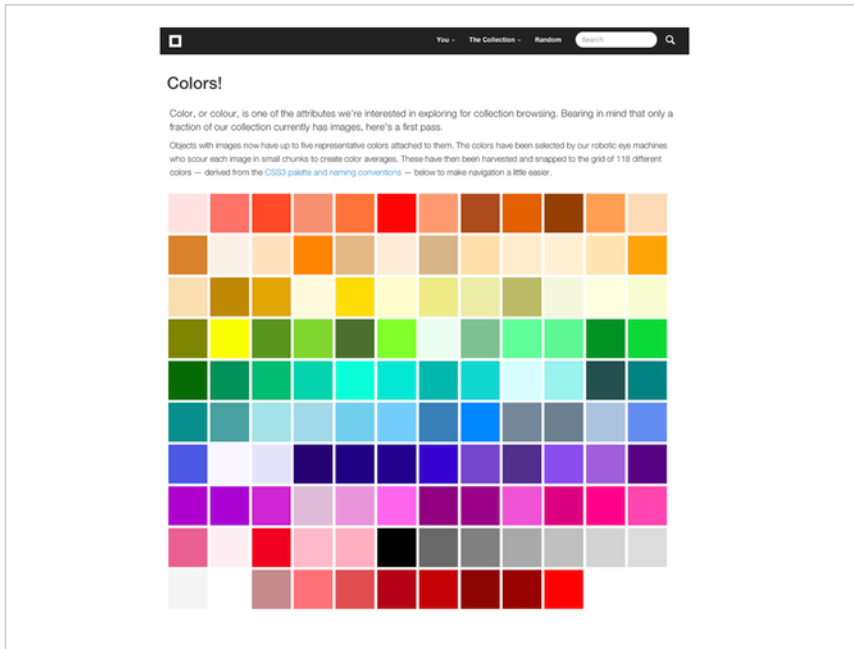
#ef0403 <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css3/ef0403>
/ becomes

#ff0000 <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css3/ff0000>
/ or “red”.

#f2e463 <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css3/f2e463>
/ becomes

#f0e68c <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css3/f0e68c>
/ or “khaki” and so on.

This approach allows us to not only return matches for a specific color but also to show objects that are more *like* a color than not. It’s a nice way to demonstrate the breadth of the collection and also an invitation to pair objects that might never be seen together.



From the beginning we've always planned to support multiple color palettes. Since the initial search-by-color functionality was built in a hurry with a focus on seeing whether we could get it to work *at all* adding support for multiple palettes was always going to require some re-jiggering of the original code. Which of course means that finding the time to make those changes had to compete with **the crush of everything else** <http://www.cooperhewitt.org/new-experience/> and on most days it got left behind.

Earlier this year Rebecca Alison Meyer **the 6-year old daughter** <http://meyerweb.com/eric/thoughts/category/personal/rebecca/> of Eric Meyer, a long-standing member of the CSS community, died of cancer. **Eric's contributions and work to promote the CSS standard can not be overstated.** <http://meyerweb.com/eric/css/> The web would be an entirely other (an entirely poorer) space without his efforts and so some people suggested that a 139th color be added to the CSS Color module to recognize his work and honor his daughter. In June **Dominique Hazaël-Massieux**

wrote <http://discourse.specifiction.org/t/name-663399-becca-purple-in-css4-color/225> :

I'm not sure about how one goes adding names to CSS colors, and what the specific purpose they fulfill, but I think it would be a good recognition of **@meyerweb** <http://www.twitter.com/meyerweb/>'s impact on CSS, and a way to recognize that standardization is first and foremost a social process, to name #663399 color "Becca Purple".

In reply **Eric Meyer**

wrote <http://meyerweb.com/eric/thoughts/2014/06/19/rebeccapurple/> :

I have been made aware of the proposal to add the named color beccapurple (equivalent to #663399) to the CSS specification, and also of the debate that surrounds it.

I understand the arguments both for and against the proposal, but obviously I am too close to both the subject and the situation to be able to judge for myself. Accordingly, I let the editors of the Colors specification know that I will accept whatever the Working Group decides on this issue, pro or con. The WG is debating the matter now.

I did set one condition: that if the proposal is accepted, the official name be rebeccapurple. A couple of weeks before she died, Rebecca informed us that she was about to be a big girl of six years old, and Becca was a baby name. Once she turned six, she wanted everyone (not just me) to call her Rebecca, not Becca.

She made it to six. For almost twelve hours, she was six. So Rebecca it is and must be.

Shortly after that **#663399** <http://dev.w3.org/csswg/css-color/#valdef-color-rebeccapurple> or **rebeccapurple** <http://dev.w3.org/csswg/css-color/#valdef-color-rebeccapurple> was added to the CSS4 Colors module specification. At which point it only seemed right to finally add support for multiple color palettes to the collections website.

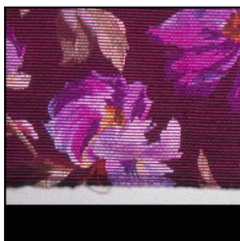
OBJECTS IN THE SHADE OF

We have 52 objects that overlap with this color in the **CSS4 palette** and this is page 1 of 2

Sometimes called "**rebeccapurple**" in the robot-speak of the **CSS4 color palette** this is known as **#663399**
Or perhaps you'd like to see the **intersection** between this color and **Crayola** or **CSS3** palettes?




Sidewall, "Ascending Sun", 1968-70 Hand-folded and dyed Japanese paper. Gift of Barbara White. 2000-64-41
There are **1 people** in **2 roles** are associated with this object
This object is part of **Wallcoverings** collection.




Textile Technique: warp-printed. Anonymous bequest in memory of Albert and Rebecca Eisberg. 1938-82-60-a
There are **2 people** in **2 roles** are associated with this object
This object is part of **Textiles** collection.




Textile Technique: printed. Anonymous bequest in memory of Albert and Rebecca Eisberg. 1938-82-62
There is **one person** is associated with this object This object is part of **Textiles** collection. There are **2 images** of this object.

Over the course of a month or so, in the margins of day, all of the search-by-color code was rewritten to work with more than a single palette and now **you can search the collection for objects in the shade of rebeccapurple** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css4/663399/> .

In addition to the **CSS3** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/palettes/css3/> and **CSS4** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/palettes/css4/> color palettes we also added support for the **Crayola** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/palettes/crayola/> color palette. For example, the closest color to “**rebeccapurple**” <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css4/663399/> in the Crayola scheme of things is “**cyber grape**” <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/crayola/663399/> .

You can see all the possible nearest-colors for an object by appending /colors to an object page URL. For example:

<https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/18380795/colors> <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/18380795/colors>

The dominant color for this object is

#683e7e <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/683e7e/>

which maps to

#58427c <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/crayola/58427c> or “cyber grape” in Crayola-speak and

#483d8b <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css3/483d8b> or “dark slate blue” in CSS3-speak and

#663399 <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/css4/663399> or “rebeccapurple” in CSS4-speak.

Now that we’ve done the work to support multiple palettes the only limits to adding more is time and imagination. I would like to add a greyscale palette. I would like to add one or more color-blind palettes. I would especially like to add a “blue” palette – one that spans **non-photo**

blue https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-photo_blue through **International Klein Blue** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Klein_Blue all the way to **Kind of Bloop midnight**

blue <http://creativemornings.com/talks/andy-baio/2?play=0> just to see where along that spectrum objects which aren’t even a little bit blue would fall.

WHAT COLOR IS PRINT, "COLOR OF GREEN OLD AGE (KOKI-NO-IRO), NO. 46", CA. 1910 ?

It depends on **how you look at it**

Source	Crayola*	CSS3	CSS4
 #683e7e	 #68427c "cyber grape"	 #483d8b "dark slate blue"	 #663399 "rebeccapurple"
 #9c6eaa	 #926eae "violet (purple)"	 #9370d8 "medium purple"	 #778899 "lightslategray"
 #a4b97d	 #bab66c "olive green"	 #8fbc8f "dark sea green"	 #8fbc8f "darkseagreen"

The point being that there are any number of color palettes that we can devise and use as a lens through which to see our collection. Part of the reason we chose to include the Crayola color palette in version "2" of search-by-color is because the colors they've chosen have been given expressive names whose meaning is richer than the sum of their descriptive parts. What does it mean for an object's colors to be described as **macaroni and cheese** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/crayola/ffbd88/> -ish or **outer space** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/crayola/414a4c/> -ish in nature? Erika Hall's 2007 talk **Copy is Interface** <http://www.slideshare.net/mulegirl/copy-is-interface> is an excellent discussion of this idea.

I spoke about some of these things <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2014/09/12/colophon/#debate> last month at the **The Search is Over** <http://www.searchisover.org/> workshop, in London. I described the work we have done on the collections website, to date, as a kind of **managing of**

absence <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/albers-boxes/> . Specifically the absence of metadata and ways to compensate for its lack or incompleteness while still providing a meaningful catalog and resource.

It is through this work that we started to articulate the idea that: The value of the whole in aggregate, for all its flaws, outweighs the value of a perfect subset. The irregular nature of **our collection**

metadata <http://www.github.com/cooperhewitt/collection/> has also forced us to consider that even if there were a single unified interface to convey the complexities of our collection it is not a luxury we will enjoy any time soon.

COOPER HEWITT

SEARCH THE COLLECTION 🔍 MENU ☰

YOU - TOYS - EXPLORE THE COLLECTION - RANDOM

OBJECTS IN THE SHADE OF ■

We have 107 objects that overlap with this color in the **Crayola® palette** and this is page 3 of 3

Sometimes called **"Neon Carrot"** in the robot-speak of the **Crayola® color palette** this is known as **#ffa343**
Or perhaps you'd like to see the **intersection** between this color and **CSS3** or **CSS4** palettes?



This object has been digitized but we can't show it to you just yet.

■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Textile printed. 1999-27-13
There is **one person** associated with this object. This object is part of **Textiles** collection.



■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Poster, "Russian Youth Perspective", 1976 Offset lithograph on white paper. Gift of Unknown Donor. **1980-32-1240**
This object is part of **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** collection.



■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Poster, "Manpower Temporary Services - [Alphabet Letters on File Folders]", 1991 Offset lithograph on paper. **1991-69-35**
There are **3 people in 3 roles** associated with this object. This object is part of **Drawings, Prints, and Graphic Design** collection.

Further the efforts of more and more institutions (the Cooper Hewitt included) to embark on mass-digitization projects forces an issue that we, as a sector, have been able to side-step until now: That no one, including lots of people who actually work at museums, have ever seen much of the work in our collections.

So in relatively short-order we will transition from a space defined by an absence of data to one defined by a surfeit of, at the very least, photographic evidence that no one will know how to navigate.

To be clear: This is a *good problem* to have but it does mean that we will need to start thinking about models to recognize **the shape of the proverbial elephant in the room** <http://www.engineering.com/DesignerEdge/DesignerEdgeArticles/ArticleID/6302/Billy-the-LiDAR-Elephant.aspx> and building tools to see it.

It is in those tools that another equally important challenge lies. The scale and the volume of the mass-digitization projects being undertaken means that out of necessity any kind of first-pass cataloging of that data will be done by machines. There simply isn't the time (read: money) to allow things to be cataloged by human hands and so we will inevitably defer to the opinion of computer algorithms.

This is not necessary as our prediction as it might sound. **Color search** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/objects/colors/> is an example of this scenario and so far it's worked out pretty well for us. What search-by-color and **other algorithmic cataloging** <http://goodformandspectacle.wordpress.com/2014/10/23/internal-rd-project-1-netflix-o-matic/> points to is the need to develop an iconography, or a colophon, to indicate machine bias. To design and create language and conventions that convey the properties of the “extruder” that a dataset has been shaped by.

a colophon for bias



Those conventions don't really exist yet. Bracketing search by color with an identifiable palette (a bias) is one stab at the problem but there are so many more places where we will need to signal the meaning (the subtext?) of an automated decision. We've tried to address one facet of this problem with the different graphic elements we use to indicate **the reasons why an object may not have an image** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2013/05/05/design-thanking/#face> .



Left to right: We're supposed to have a picture for this object...but we can't find it; This object has not been photographed; This object has been photographed but for some reason we're not allowed to show it to you...you know, even though it's been acquired by the Smithsonian.

Another obvious and (maybe?) easy place to try out this idea is **search** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/search> itself. Search engines are not, in fact, magic. Most search engines work the same way: A given string is “tokenized” and then each resultant piece is “filtered”. For the example the phrase “**checkered Girard** **samples**” <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/search/collection/?query=checkered+girard+samples> might typically be tokenized by splitting things on whitespace but you could just as easily tokenize it by **any pattern that can be expressed to a computer** <https://xkcd.com/208/>. So depending on your tokenized you might end up with a list like:

- *checkered*
- *Girard*
- *samples*

Or:

- *checkered Girard*
- *samples*

Each one of those “tokens” are then analyzed and filtered according to their properties. Maybe they get **grouped by their phonetics** <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soundex> , which is essentially how the snap-to-grid trick works for the collection’s color search. Maybe they are grouped by what type of word they are: proper nouns, verbs, prepositions and so on. I’ve never actually seen a search engine that does this but there is nothing technically to prevent someone from doing it either.

The simplest and dumbest thing would be to indicate on a search results page that your query results were generated using one or more tokenizers or filters. In our case that would be (1) tokenizer and (5) filters.

Tokenizers:

1. *Unicode Standard Annex #29* <http://unicode.org/reports/tr29/>

Filters:

1. *Remove English*

possessives https://lucene.apache.org/core/4_0_0/analyzers-common/org/apache/lucene/analysis/en/EnglishPossessiveFilter.html

2. *Lowercase all*

tokens <http://www.elasticsearch.org/guide/en/elasticsearch/reference/current/analysis-lowercase-tokenfilter.html>

3. *Ignore a set list of*

stopwords <http://www.elasticsearch.org/guide/en/elasticsearch/reference/1.4/analysis-stop-tokenfilter.html>

4. *Stem tokens according to the Porter Stemming*

Algorithm <http://snowball.tartarus.org/algorithms/porter/stemmer.html>

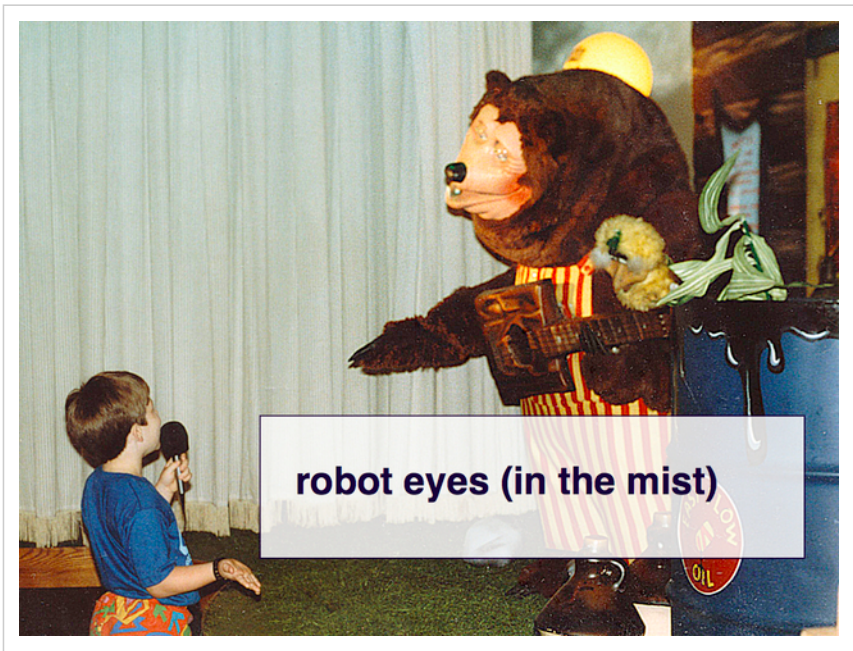
5. *Convert non-ascii characters to*

ascii <http://www.elasticsearch.org/guide/en/elasticsearch/guide/current/asciifolding-token-filter.html>

That's not very sexy or **ooh-**

shiny <http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/AttentionDeficitOohShiny> but not everything needs to be. What it does, though, is provide a measure of transparency for people to gauge the reality that any result set is the product of choices which may have little or no relationship to the question being asked or the person asking that question.

These are devices, for sure, and they are not meant to replace a more considered understanding or contemplation of a topic but they can act as an important shorthand to indicate the arc of an answer's motive.



And that's just for search engines. Now imagine what happens when we all
start pointing computer vision
algorithms <http://www.robertelliottsmith.com/?p=530> at our collections...

Update: Since publishing this blog post the nice people working on the
GOV.UK <http://www.gov.uk/> websites launched **“info”**
pages [https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2014/10/29/info-pages-](https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2014/10/29/info-pages-publishing-data-about-user-needs-and-metrics/)
[publishing-data-about-user-needs-and-metrics/](https://insidegovuk.blog.gov.uk/2014/10/29/info-pages-publishing-data-about-user-needs-and-metrics/) . Visitors can now append
/info to any of the pages on the gov.uk website will and see what and who and
how that part of the website is supposed to do. Writing about the project they say:

An 'info' page contains the user needs the page is intended to meet ...
Providing an easy way to jump from content to the underpinning needs
allows content designers coming to a new topic to understand the need
and build empathy with the users quicker. Publishing the GOV.UK
user needs should also make the team's work more transparent and
traceable.

Bravo!

2014-10-27



**Things I have written about
elsewhere #1417478400**

HTTP ponies

HTTP ponies

*This is a blog post that was **originally written for the Cooper Hewitt Labs blog** labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/http-ponies/ , and published on December 02, 2014.*

Most of the image processing for **the collections website** <http://collection.cooperhewitt.org/> is done using the **Python** <http://www.python.org/> programming language. This includes things like: **extracting colours** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/giv-do/> or **calculating an image's entropy** <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2013/default-sort-or-what-would-shannon-do/> (its “busy-ness”) or generating those **small halftone versions of image** http://images.collection.cooperhewitt.org/23576_4d2429d0623da461_d.gif that you might see while you wait for a larger image to load.

Soon we hope to start doing some more sophisticated computer vision related work which will almost certainly mean using the **OpenCV** <http://opencv.org/> tool chain. This likely means that we'll continue to use Python because it has easy to use and easy to install **bindings** http://docs.opencv.org/trunk/doc/py_tutorials/py_tutorials.html to hide most of the fiddly bits required to look at images with “robot eyes”.



The collections website itself **is not written in Python** <http://www.aaronland.info/weblog/2012/11/09/jello/#parallel-tms> and that's okay. There are lots of ways for different languages to hold hands inside of a single “application” and we've used many of them. But we also think that most of these little pieces of functionality are useful in and of themselves and shouldn't require that a person (including us) have to burden themselves with the minutiae of

the collections website infrastructure to use them.

We've slowly been taking the various bits of code we've written over the years and putting them in to discrete libraries that can then be wrapped up in little standalone HTTP "pony" or "plumbing" servers. This idea of exposing bespoke pieces of functionality via a web server is hardly new. Dave Winer has been talking about "**fractional**

horsepower HTTP

servers <http://scripting.com/davenet/1997/09/14/FractionalHorsepowerHTTPSe.html> " since 1997. What's changed between then

and now is that it's more fun to say "**HTTP**

pony <https://pinboard.in/u:straup/t:httppony> " and it's much easier to bake a little web server in to an application because HTTP has become the lingua franca of the internet and that means almost every programming language in use today knows how to "speak" it.

In practice we end up with a "stack" of individual pieces that looks something like this:

1. Other people's code that usually does all the heavy-lifting.

An example of this might be Giv Parvaneh's

RoyGBiv <http://roygbiv.givp.org/> *library for*

extracting colours from images or Mike Migurski's

Atkinson <https://github.com/migurski/atkinson>

library for dithering images.

2. A variety of

cooperhewitt.* <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/?>

query=py-cooperhewitt- *libraries to hide the details of other people's code.*

3. The

cooperhewitt.flask.http_pony <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-flask> *library which exports a setup of helper utilities for the running Flask-based HTTP servers. Things like: doing a minimum amount of sanity checking for uploads and filenames or handling (common) server configuration details.*

4. A variety of plumbing-SOMETHING-

server <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/?query=plumbing-> *HTTP servers which export functionality via HTTP GET and POST requests. For example: plumbing-atkinson-server* <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing-atkinson-server> , *plumbing-palette-server* <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing-palette-server> *and so on.*

5. **Flask** <http://flask.pocoo.org/> , a self-described “micro-framework” which is what handles all the details of the HTTP call and response life cycle.

6. Optionally, a **WSGI-compliant server-container-thing-y** <https://www.python.org/dev/peps/pep-0333/> for managing requests to a number Flask instances.

Personally we like

gunicorn <http://www.gunicorn.org> *but there are many to choose from.*

Here is a *not-really-but-treat-it-like-pseudo-code-anyway* example without any error handling for the sake of brevity of a so-called “plumbing” server:

```
# Let's pretend this file is called 'example-server.py'.

import flask
from flask_cors import cross_origin
import cooperhewitt.example.code as code
import cooperhewitt.flask.http_pony as http_pony

app = http_pony.setup_flask_app('EXAMPLE_SERVER')

@app.route('/', methods=['GET', 'POST'])
@cross_origin(methods=['GET', 'POST'])
def do_something():

    if flask.request.method=='POST':
        path = http_pony.get_upload_path(app)
    else:
        path = http_pony.get_local_path(app)

    rsp = code.do_something(path)
    return flask.jsonify(rsp)

if __name__ == '__main__':
    http_pony.run_from_cli(app)
```

So then if we just wanted to let Flask take care of handling HTTP requests we would start the server like this:

```
$> python example-server.py -c example-server.cfg
```

And then we might talk to it like this:

```
$> curl -X POST -F 'file=@/path/to/file' http://localhost:5000
```

Or from the programming language of our choosing:

```
function example_do_something($path){
    $url = "http://localhost:5000";
    $file = curl_file_create($path);
    $body = array('file' => $file);
    $rsp = http_post($url, $body);
    return $rsp;
}
```

Notice the way that all the requests are being sent to `localhost`? We don't expose any of these servers to the public internet or even between different machines on the same network. But we like having the flexibility to do that if necessary.

Finally if we just need to do something natively or want to write a simple command-line tool we can ignore all the HTTP stuff and do this:

```
$> python
>>> import cooperhewitt.example.code as code
>>> code.do_something("/path/to/file")
```

Which is a nice separation of concerns. It doesn't mean that programs write themselves but they probably shouldn't anyway.

If you think about things in terms of bricks and mortar you start to notice that there is a bad habit in (software) engineering culture of trying to standardize the latter or to treat it as if, with enough care and forethought, it might achieve sentience.

That's a thing we try to guard against. Bricks, in all their uniformity, are awesome but the point of a brick is to enable a

multiplicity of outcomes so we prefer to leave those details, and the work they entail, to people rather than software libraries.



Most of this code has been open-sourced and **hiding in plain sight** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/> for a while now but since we're writing a blog post about it all, here is a list of related tools and libraries. These all fall into categories 2, 3 or 4 in the list above.

- ***cooperhewitt.swatchbook*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-swatchbook> — *Functions for working with colour palettes.*
- ***cooperhewitt.roboteyes.atkinson*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-roboteyes-atkinson> — *Functions for rendering halftone images using Bill Atkinson's dithering technique in both pure-Python (slow) or C (fast) if the `atk` library is available.*
- ***cooperhewitt.roboteyes.colors*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-roboteyes-colors> — *Functions for extracting colours from an image using a specific palette (as defined by the `cooperhewitt.swatchbook` library).*
- ***cooperhewitt.roboteyes.opencv*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-roboteyes-opencv> — *A variety of **OpenCV** <http://www.opencv.org> related functions. This one doesn't really do anything yet but we're including it here for good measure.*
- ***cooperhewitt.roboteyes.shannon*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-roboteyes-shannon> — *Functions for measuring an image's entropy and for calculating where to crop an image when generating*

thumbnails.

- ***cooperhewitt.roboteyes*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-roboteyes> — *A meta library whose only purpose is to install all the other py-cooperhewitt-roboteyes libraries at once.*
- ***cooperhewitt.flask*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-flask> — *Utility functions for writing Flask-based HTTP applications. The most important thing to remember about things in this class is that they are utility functions. They simply wrap some of the boilerplate tasks required to set up a Flask application but you will still need to take care of all the details.*
- ***plumbing-atkinson-server*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing-atkinson-server> — *A simple Flask-based HTTP pony server to dither images.*
- ***plumbing-shannon-server*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing-shannon-server> — *A simple Flask-based HTTP pony server for extracting “Shannon-related” properties from images.*
- ***plumbing-palette-server*** <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing->

`palette-server` — *A simple Flask-based HTTP pony server for extracting colors from images.*

- ***plumbing-bauta-***

server [https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing-](https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing-bauta-server)

`bauta-server` — *A simple Flask-based HTTP pony server for doing OpenCV related processing. This one, like*

cooperhewitt.roboteyes.opencv <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-roboteyes-opencv> ,
doesn't really do anything yet but it will and I just like saying

"bauta https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnival_of_Venice#Bauta ***"*** *in the context of* ***face***

detection <http://cvdazzle.com/> .

Everything has a standard Python `setup.py` for installing all the required bits (and more importantly dependencies) in all the right places. Hopefully this will make it easier for us break out little bits of awesomeness as free agents and share them with the world. The proof, as always, will be in the doing.

For example:

```
$> ucd 毌  
NET; WEB; NETWORK, NET FOR CATCHING RABBIT
```

Or:

```
$> ucd THIS → WAY  
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER T  
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER H  
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER I  
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER S  
SPACE  
RIGHTWARDS ARROW  
SPACE  
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER W  
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER A  
LATIN CAPITAL LETTER Y
```

There is, of course, a handy “pony” server (called `ucd-server`) for asking these questions over HTTP:

```
$> curl -X GET -s 'http://localhost:8080/?text=𐀀%20HAT' | python -mjson.tool  
{  
  "Chars": [  
    {  
      "Char": "\u2655",  
      "Hex": "2655",  
      "Name": "WHITE CHESS QUEEN"  
    },  
    {  
      "Char": " ",  
      "Hex": "0020",  
      "Name": "SPACE"  
    },  
    {  
      "Char": "H",  
      "Hex": "0048",  
      "Name": "LATIN CAPITAL LETTER H"  
    },  
    {  
      "Char": "A",  
      "Hex": "0041",  
      "Name": "LATIN CAPITAL LETTER A"  
    },  
    {  
      "Char": "T",  
      "Hex": "0054",  
      "Name": "LATIN CAPITAL LETTER T"  
    }  
  ]  
}
```

```
} 1
```

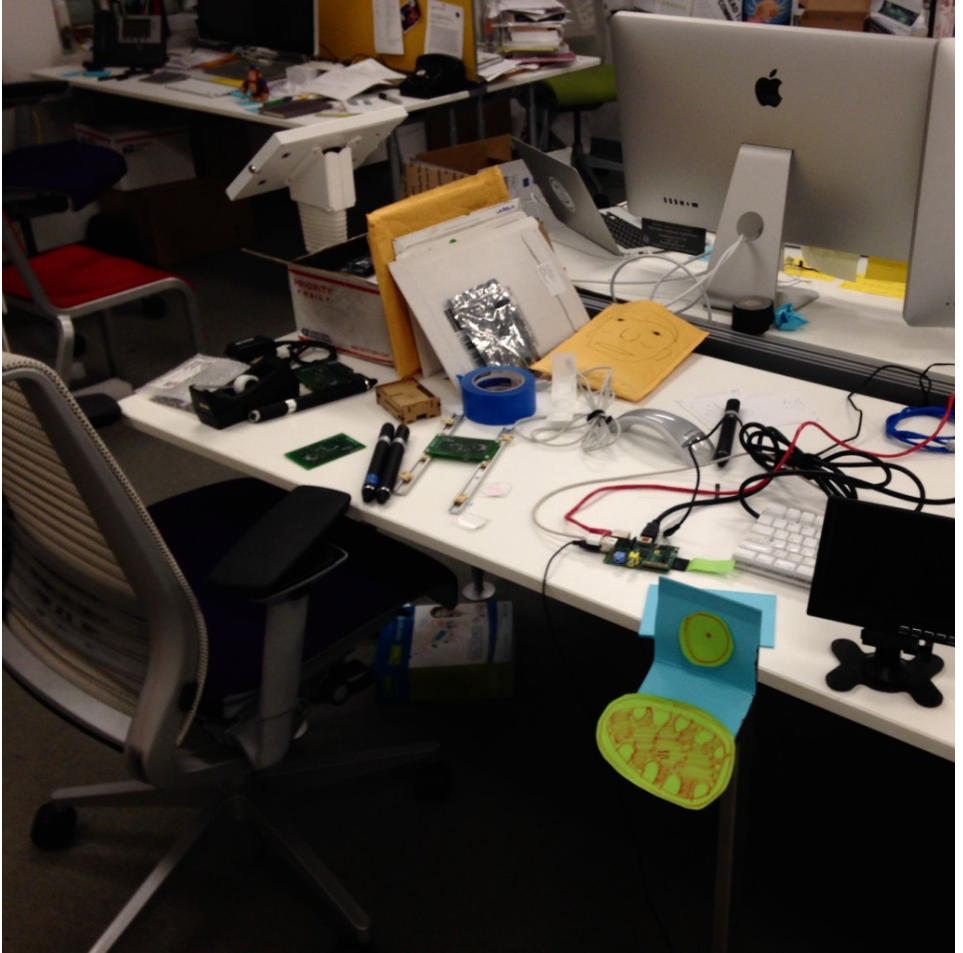
This one, potentially, has a very real and practical use-case but it's not something we're quite ready to talk about yet. In the meantime, it's a fun and hopefully useful tool so we thought we'd share it with you.

Note: There are equivalent

libraries <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/py-cooperhewitt-unicode> *and an **HTTP***

pony <https://github.com/cooperhewitt/plumbing-ucd-server> *for **ucd** written in Python but they are incomplete compared to the Go version and may eventually be deprecated altogether.*

Comments, suggestions and gentle clue-bats are welcome and encouraged. Enjoy!



2014-12-02

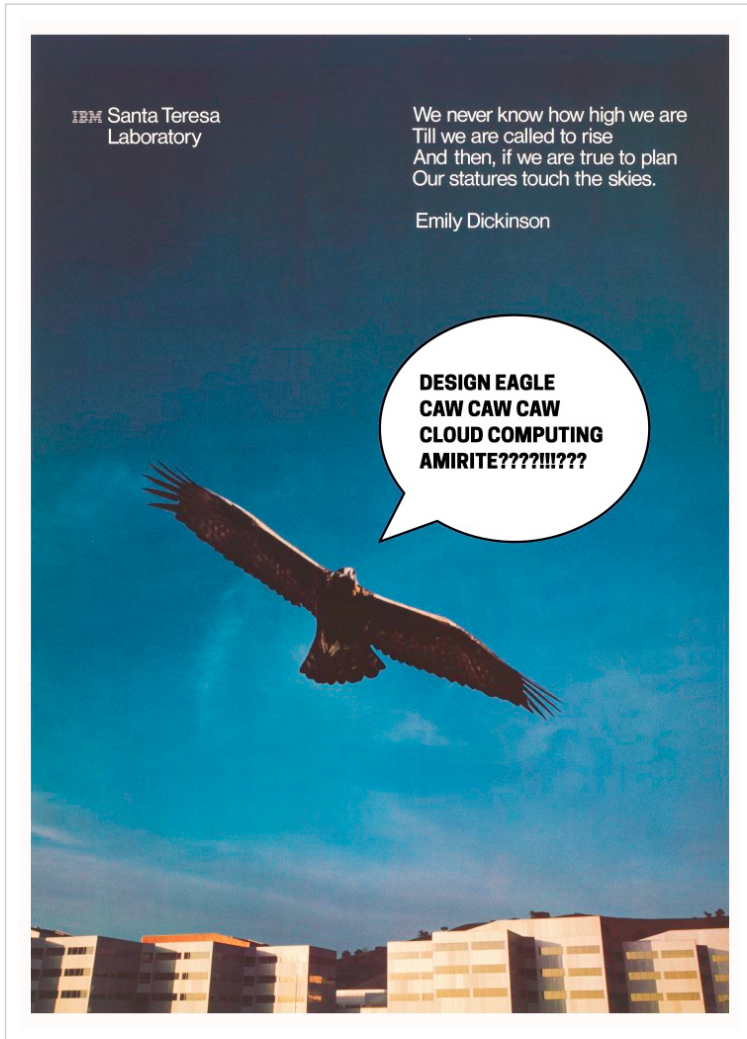


Things I have written about elsewhere #1418342400

API methods (new and old) to reflect reality

API methods (new and old) to reflect reality

*This is a blog post that was **originally written for the Cooper Hewitt Labs***
blog <http://labs.cooperhewitt.org/2014/api-methods-to-reflect-reality/> , and
published on December 12, 2014.



A quick end-of-week blog post to mention that now that **the museum has re-opened** <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/new-cooper-hewitt> we have updated the **cooperhewitt.galleries.openingHours** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/method>

s/cooperhewitt.galleries.openingHours and

cooperhewitt.galleries.isOpen <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.galleries.isOpen> API methods to reflect... well, reality.

In addition to the **cooperhewitt.galleries** API methods we've also published corresponding **openingHours** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.cafe.openingHours/explore/> and **isOpen** <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.cafe.isOpen/explore/> methods for the cafe!

For example,
cooperhewitt.galleries.isOpen <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.galleries.isOpen/explore/> .

```
curl 'https://api.collection.cooperhewitt.org/rest/?method=cooperhewitt.galleries.isOpen&access_token=***'
{
  "open": 0,
  "holiday": 0,
  "hours": {
    "open": "10:00",
    "close": "18:00"
  },
  "time": "18:01",
  "timezone": "America/New_York",
  "stat": "ok"
}
```

Or,
cooperhewitt.cafe.openingHours <https://collection.cooperhewitt.org/api/methods/cooperhewitt.cafe.openingHours/explore/> .

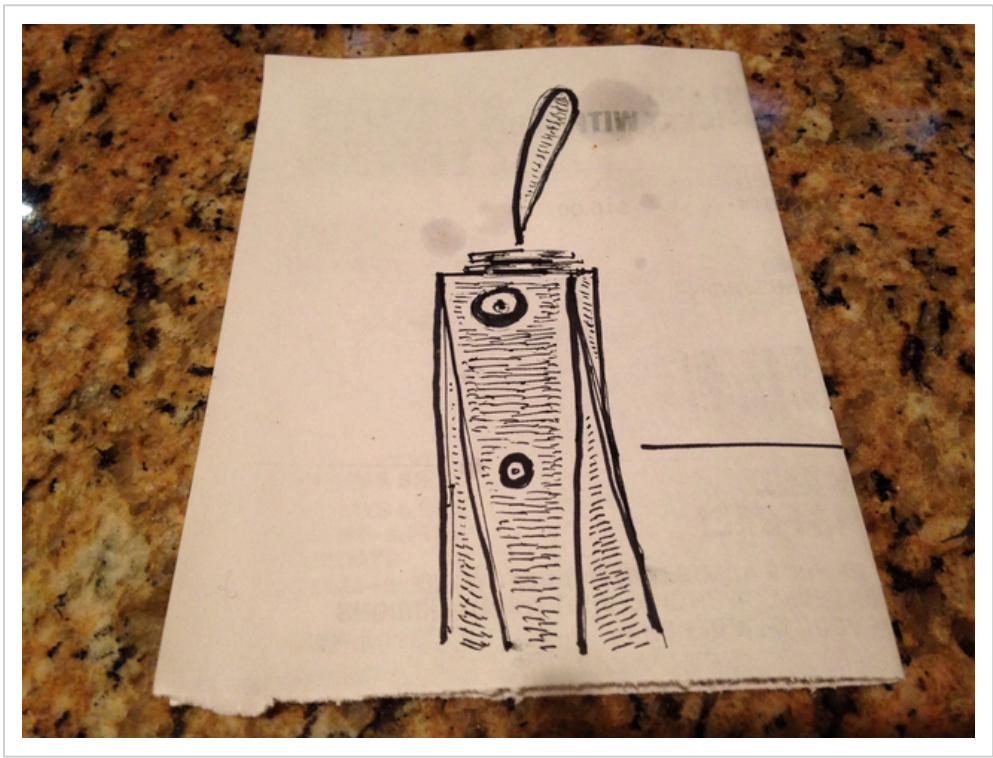
```
curl -X GET 'https://api.collection.cooperhewitt.org/rest/?method=cooperhewitt.cafe.openingHours&access_token=***'
{
  "hours": {
    "Sunday": {
      "open": "07:30",
      "close": "18:00"
    },
    "Monday": {
      "open": "07:30",
      "close": "18:00"
    },
    "Tuesday": {
      "open": "07:30",
      "close": "18:00"
    },
    "Wednesday": {
      "open": "07:30",
      "close": "18:00"
    },
    "Thursday": {
      "open": "07:30",
      "close": "18:00"
    },
    "Friday": {

```

```
        "open": "07:30",
        "close": "18:00"
    },
    "Saturday": {
        "open": "07:30",
        "close": "21:00"
    }
},
"timezone": "America/New_York",
"stat": "ok"
}
```

Because **coffee** <http://themuseumofthefuture.com/2012/09/29/what-is-the-best-cultural-venue-to-drink-a-coffee-and-why-we-should-care/> , right?

2014-12-12



official is as official does

for the record / 2014

for the record / 2014

- *officials would not say whether the president will seek to recast the war on terrorism as the war on motive in the state of the union speech — 2014-01-*

27 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/427929546038337536>

- *officials refused to indicate whether the they would seek to have the honorific of “president” changed to “chief unitary executive officer” — 2014-01-*

28 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/428138010287550464>

- *officials refused to comment / on whether or not they are drafting plans outlining a new toxic asset recovery program for the internet — 2014-04-*

09 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/453901587313078272>

- *officials declined to comment whether intelligence analysts are issued mugs emblazoned with the words “all your buffer are overflow to us” — 2014-04-*

12 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/454922102140059648>

- *officials declined to comment on news of a “hunger games” style competition involving two members of every bus taking workers to the valley — 2014-04-*

19 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/457603759460610048>

- *officials declined to comment on plans to draft legislation setting “commercially reasonable” standards for privacy*

— 2014-04-25 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/459662261163143168>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that facebook is planning a hostile takeover of comcast following the time-warner acquisition — 2014-05-*

08 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/464426596389376000>

- *officials refused to comment on reports the NSA has engaged in the wide scale rewriting of block chain histories / “what reports?” said one — 2014-05-*

10 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/465106218726731776>

- *officials declined to comment on news of a secretive airline company operating stealth concorde flights in and out of private airports — 2014-05-*

12 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/465866509777399808>

- *officials declined to comment on news that "five eyes" intelligence agency staffers sometimes refer to themselves as <http://www.dandwiki.com/wiki/MSRD:Psionics> — 2014-*

05-14 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/466588764836724739>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that the victors wrote the algorithms — 2014-05-*

15 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/466955139879026688>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that searches for the government sanctioned breakup of bell systems in 1982*

were being throttled — 2014-05-

15 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/467018581365256193>

- *officials would not comment on news of a proposed "high frequency trading algorithms for the digital humanities" professional certification — 2014-05-*

22 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/469529988027670528>

- *officials would not comment on news the former president sent a USA-shaped cheese plate from the 9/11 museum shop to his french counterpart — 2014-05-*

23 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/469830590863540224>

- *officials refused to comment when asked whether drones would participate in the annual fleet week flyovers of the city — 2014-05-*

24 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/470205092101361664>

- *officials did not comment on news they seek to have trust-but-verify ruled unconstitutional on grounds that it violates the first amendment — 2014-05-*

24 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/470238683518738432>

- *officials declined to comment on reports of a memo suggesting that "fear uncertainty and doubt" can be considered a kind of social contract — 2014-06-*

01 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/473150947062185984>

- *officials declined to speculate on the meaning of a leaked memo titled “we have always been at war with 127.0.0.1”*

— 2014-06-07 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/475291665872486400>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that an armada of sol lewitt inspired dazzle ships would patrol the rivers around new york city — 2014-06-*

12 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/477177561584123904>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that the facebook emotional timeline experiment was really just a metaphor for net neutrality — 2014-06-*

30 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/483434159281418241>

- *officials refused to comment on news that questions about facebook would continue to be dropped on the floor until morale improves — 2014-07-*

03 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/484514307053326338>

- *officials did not comment on news that a remake of do androids dream of electric sheep will feature decker keeping a pet BIGDOG on the roof — 2014-07-*

04 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/485107470398812160>

- *officials from @mapzen and @mapbox refused to comment on reports that martha stewart's publishing arm is set to launch a line of map tiles — 2014-07-*

30 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/494546424647131136>

- *officials would not comment on reports that the record will be amended to hereafter refer to the city-state as a “LAN party” — 2014-07-*

31 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/494980559031263233>

- *officials would not comment on reports that the line separating dazzle paint and op-art had recently been re-classified — 2014-08-*

08 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/497759268108775424>

- *officials would not speculate whether zipcode rock would eventually be seen as the killer feature or the clippy of the surveillance state — 2014-08-*

08 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/497807064576851968>

- *officials would not speculate whether or not history should be granted common carrier status — 2014-08-*

15 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/500284986411737088>

- *officials in ferguson declined to comment on the news that @flickr is now the official photo-sharing app of football games — 2014-08-*

18 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/501319321206136832>

- *officials declined to comment of reports that metaphor is scheduled to be reclassified as a kind of rent-seeking —*

2014-08-26 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/504234751541403648>

- *officials refused to speculate on reports that BIGDOG had been sighted sniffing around stationary uber cabs — 2014-08-*

26 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/504363464090222592>

- *officials refused to comment when asked whether individuals would be able to access CCTV footage of themselves as hyperlapse videos — 2014-08-*

27 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/504749669248151554>

- *officials declined to comment on news that mandelbrot's line in the sand had been discovered or to speculate whether it would be classified — 2014-09-*

18 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/512661435147497472>

- *officials declined to comment on news that the dia foundation and lego had reached a licensing agreement for walter de maria's "earth room" — 2014-09-*

24 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/514810280279556096>

- *officials declined to comment when asked whether the class action lawsuit against the social contract was filed by the street or the man — 2014-10-*

03 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/518047263395160064>

- *officials declined to comment when asked if it was like uber for turing tests — 2014-10-*

12 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/521313955466452992>

- *officials declined to speculate on reports of plans to classify convenience as a kind of honeypot — 2014-10-*

12 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/521404942259847168>

- *officials declined to comment on rumours that a lego-branded glitch art box set would be released in time for the holiday shopping season — 2014-10-*

26 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/526365163604410368>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that spotify has acquired the collected works of sol lewitt — 2014-10-*

27 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/526834458948034560>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that star-fucking would be granted common carrier status — 2014-10-*

31 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/528206899725209600>

- *officials declined to comment on reports that metaphor would be reclassified as product placement for tax purposes — 2014-11-*

01 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/528682303116283904>

- *officials refused to comment on reports of a study describing a blockchain for gentrification — 2014-11-*

20 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/535460213403693056>

- *officials refused to speculate on rumours that the end of history would be renewed for a second season — 2014-11-*

23 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/536547387939241985>

- *officials refused to speculate when asked whether a national security letter had been issued against the end of history — 2014-11-*

24 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/536914669987168256>

- *officials declined to speculate whether the practice of deliberately jumping to page two of a google search results set was the new normcore — 2014-12-*

04 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/540496002466476032>

- *officials declined to comment when asked whether convolutional neural networks would be required to come equipped with backdoors — 2014-12-*

05 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/540866291469647872>

- *officials also refused to speculate when asked whether convolutional neural networks would be required to wear bodycams — 2014-12-*

05 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/540866601764274176>

- *officials did not comment on reports the phrase "move fast and break things" was part of a normalization campaign for enhanced interrogation — 2014-12-*

12 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/543464225767960576>

- *officials would not comment on reports of a RFP for a*

"learned helplessness" augmented reality platform — 2014-

12-12 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/543467525137530880>

- *officials declined to speculate when asked whether surge pricing applied to the end of history — 2014-12-*

15 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/544435768177872896>

- *officials would not discuss reports that the social contract was being considered for reclassification as a kind of vendor lock-in — 2014-12-*

19 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/545938754243162112>

- *officials would not comment on reports the algorithm had invoked the fifth amendment when asked how it would interpret the fourth amendment — 2014-12-*

21 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/546679760580280320>

- *officials would not comment on rumours of a remake of kevin costner's 1997 film "the postman" but re-titled "the ISP" — 2014-12-*

26 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/548558465766273025>

- *officials would not speculate on rumours of the existence of an emoji character set for unitary executive theory — 2014-*

12-27 <https://twitter.com/thisisaaronland/status/548869215479164928>

- *officials did not comment on reports that the fulton street transit hub had been nicknamed THE SHAPE in honour of*

